S. HRG. 99-477

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND REENTRY ACT OF 1985

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, ARTS AND HUMANITIES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

S. 1525

TO AMEND THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES FOR DROPOUT PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

OCTOBER 17, 1985

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DROPOUT PREVENTION AND REENTRY ACT OF 1985

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1985

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, at 10 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Robert T. Stafford (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Stafford, Kennedy, Simon, and Pell.

Also present: Senators Chafee, Specter, Bradley, and Chiles.

Senator STAFFORD. The Subcommittee on Education, Arts and the Humanities will please come to order.

We had hoped that Senator Pell could be here as we started, but he is unavoidably temporarily detained. He will be here as soon as he can.

Under the circumstances, we would like to get started. Two of our close friends and very able Senators are here in the witness room as witnesses, one of whom is from Rhode Island. We are very happy to welcome Mr. John Chafee as the leadoff witness this morning on legislation which has been introduced by Senator Pell as principal sponsor.

Senator Chafee, we would be very glad to hear from you, and following your remarks, those of Senator Specter from Pennsylvania.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to testify before this subcommittee.

Senator STAFFORD. Like John Wayne, in the nick of time, Senator Pell has arrived.

Senator PELL. I am just here to listen.

Senator CHAFEE. I would be glad to hold back if you would like to proceed.

Senator PELL. Please proceed and I will put my statement in a little later on.

Senator STAFFORD. I will put my opening statement in the record as read.

Senator PELL. I may be encouraged to do the same.

[The opening statements of Senators Stafford and Pell follow:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR STAFFORD

Senator STAFFORD. Today, the Subcommittee on Education, Arts and the Humanities will hear testimony on the very serious prob-

lem we face with high school dropouts in our country. I commend Senator Pell for his leadership and dedication to this issue.

It is estimated that in our country 25 percent of the students entering school in the ninth grade will drop out before graduating. Statistics indicate that we are failing to reach a significant portion of our high school population, and that those students who drop out become a staggering drain on our economy. It is clearly in our Nation's best interest to examine this serious problem in order that we find the best possible solutions.

Our subcommittee would like to extend a warm welcome to the witnesses today. We are especially pleased to have four distinguished Members of Congress to testify before us. We look forward to your testimonies.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PELL

Senator PELL. I would like to commend Chairman Stafford for holding this hearing on S. 1525, the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act. Senator Stafford has exercised great leadership in the area of education as chairman of this subcommittee. His commitment to this dropout legislation once again demonstrates the deep concern he holds for the education and welfare of all our citizenry.

To my mind, this morning's hearing is of primary national importance. For, while we have focused our attention of late on the push for excellence and toughened standards, I am greatly troubled by the fact that we have ignored the needs of the student who is less academically inclined.

I am appalled by the fact that we have sustained a national dropout rate of 25 percent for the past 20 years. I have long held to the belief that the real strength of our Nation is measured by the sum total of the education and character of all our citizenry. And, to that end, if we are failing to educate one-quarter of our population, then we willingly place our national security in great peril.

This situation is far more threatening for urban areas where the dropout rate is as high as 50 percent. And, it is far more devastating for minority populations where the dropout rate can reach as high as 70 percent.

In human terms, dropping out of school all but extinguishes the chance that each child has to make it in our competitive economy. In economic terms, the sharp loss in productivity and generated taxes, as well as the prices of incarceration, unemployment, and welfare assistance, inflicts a heavy drain on our economy. It is sadly true that what we fail to invest in dropout prevention, we will be forced to pay many times over in social costs.

Senator STAFFORD. Senator Chafee, you may proceed.

The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act is a vital step in correcting a situation that has been with us for far too long. Quite simply, we have a choice as to whether we will be a nation which educates only the academically inclined, or whether we will seek to make education a reality for our entire populace.

We, as a nation, are diminished when we fail to educate one-quarter of our citizenry. And we, as a people, lose when we turn our backs on a population that has nowhere else to turn.

I would like first to thank my colleagues who are here to testify on behalf of this important piece of legislation. I would also like to thank two Rhode Islanders who will greatly enrich the scope of this hearing. Commissioner of Education Troy Earhart, who has done so much for the quality of education in Rhode Island, is to be commended for identifying the dropout problem as a State priority. And John Ramos is to be highly recognized for the very important work he has done as director of the Alternate Learning Project in Providence.

I look forward to the counsel of all our witnesses this morning, and would like to thank them for the benefit of their views as we turn our attention to this serious problem.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN H. CHAFEE, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Senator CHAFEE. I appreciate this opportunity, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, to testify on S. 1525, the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act.

Representative Hayes deserves great credit for first introducing this important legislation in the House. Since the State of Rhode Island has not escaped the dropout problem afflicting most of the Nation, I am especially happy to see that two of our State's most distinguished educators will also be testifying today.

Dr. Troy Earhart, the Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, has compiled a most impressive record as a leader and reformer at both the local and State levels. He has pinpointed greater student retention, the aim of the legislation we are discussing today, as one of his agency's primary goals for 1986. I am sure the committee will find his remarks incisive and useful.

John Ramos, director of the Alternate Learning Project in Providence, is an innovator whose highly effective program should serve as a model for the kinds of projects funded under S. 1525. The public laboratory high school he leads has received national recognition for its success in meeting the needs of students who do not fit into the traditional high school framework. As a graduate of Upward Bound who went on to Brown University, John possesses firsthand knowledge of what it takes to truly motivate a young person.

Motivation is what this legislation is really all about. The young people who drop out of our schools are those who, for a wide variety of reasons, lose the motivation to learn the skills they need to succeed as adults. One in four of the people who begin high school in this country never finish. The rate in Providence, RI has been estimated at 40 percent, while in other urban areas it is as high as 50 percent. For minorities and the poor, the rates are even higher. For all groups, the dropout rate appears to be on the rise.

It might seem ironic that the number of such dropouts is increasing while an impressive wave of educational reform is transforming our schools. However, the two trends are closely related. The broad reassessment of public education currently underway has led to more vigorous academic standards which place greater demands on students. This change is overdue, and I join everyone in this room in applauding it.

There is strong evidence, however, that this desire for excellence in public education is actually increasing the number of students who fall through the cracks in the system. As we strive to help those students capable of high achievement give their all, we are losing more and more of those for whom academic success has always been difficult. For these young people, more demanding requirements and reform measures, such as minimum competency tests, are irrelevant. Alienated by the school environment, and often burdened with family problems and poverty, these people are leaving our schools in alarming numbers.

In the face of these dire facts, it is hard to believe that we are investing $8 billion a year on elementary and secondary education. Where is that money going if we are losing at least one-quarter of those it is intended to benefit? Most of it is going to worthwhile programs which are strenthening public education in this country, but not enough is helping local school systems keep students enrolled and motivated.

This bill will assist the schools in that task by providing grants for dropout demonstration projects. The bulk of the funds authorized by this measure will go directly to identifying dropouts and potential dropouts and working to restore their motivation. In this sense, the bill does more than draw attention to the problem or call for further study. It calls for action.

Projects selected for funding will explore the reasons why students drop out; use counseling and remedial help to address the problems of dropouts and potential dropouts; offer alternative educational opportunities and disseminate results to other educational agencies.

Since future dropouts are often identifiable well before they enter the ninth grade, these projects must also develop ways to coordinate dropout prevention efforts between the high school and junior high levels. In addition, the projects must address the needs of high-school-age parents, who are high-risk candidates for dropping out.

The ramifications of the dropout crisis extend beyond our schools. Dropouts disappear from high school corridors, but they do not disappear from society. Rather, their names show up on the welfare rolls; they become drug abuse statistics, or they wind up in our overcrowded prison system. In the majority of cases, the results are tragic, both for the dropouts themselves and for the society to which most of them are unable to make a real contribution. The dropout exodus is increasing the number of those who live on the margin of society, while our social welfare system and, too frequently, our penal institutions pay the costs.

This legislation will allow us to find the most effective methods for restoring motivation to those who would drop out. Best of all, it will allow those closest to the problem, our Nation's educators, to devise, implement, and refine dropout prevention projects. I think their energy can reverse the threatening dropout trend and include all young people in our national renewal of educational purpose.

And let me say, in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I personally do not feel that this legislation is written in stone. There are a few provisions that this committee might consider amending in order to strengthen the bill. For example, I think it is worth reexamining

the provision which states that if a grant is awarded, 30 percent of the funds must be used for dropout prevention, and at least another 30 percent must be used for activities related to encouraging reentry. It is important that we consider whether we want to have the school systems burdened with worrying about 30 percent here and 30 percent there and the bookkeeeping and redtape this would entail. Also, I think it would be well for the committee to take a closer look at the formula by which this bill divides up the money, with 80 percent of the funds limited to local educational agencies enrolling more than 20,000 students. Since both large and small school systems are affected by the dropout problem, it might be fairer if we make more funds available to local educational agencies with enrollments under 20,000.

While some fine-tuning here and there might improve this legislation, there is no question that it is a major step forward. I am delighted to be a cosponsor and hope to see this measure become law.

Thank you.

Senator STAFFORD. Thank you very much, Senator Chafee.

Do you have any questions, Senator Pell?

Senator PELL. No.

I appreciate very much Senator Chafee being here and supporting this legislation, and I apologize to everyone here for being late. And I want to thank you very much.

Senator STAFFORD. I think Senator Chafee has always given us some wisdom. And since he is a principal sponsor of this bill also, I think questions about 30 percent here and 30 percent there, we understand how busy you are, Senator. You are welcome to stay and join us or leave.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you very much. I do appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator STAFFORD. Thank you very much, Senator.

The lead name on this bill that I am looking at, S. 1525, is Senator Specter, who is the principal sponsor.

We are very happy to hear from you, Senator.

STATEMENT OF HON. ARLEN SPECTER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I commend this subcommittee for scheduling such a prompt hearing on this bill. I was pleased to be a prime sponsor when it was introduced on July 30. And recognizing that the chairman of this subcommittee, the distinguished Senator from Vermont, is an original cosponsor and the ranking member, the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island is a cosponsor as well as quite a number of other Senators, I find it unnecessary to testify at great length, perhaps provide most of the time for the very distinguished panel of witnesses that have come forward.

I would like leave to have my written testimony made part of the record.

Senator STAFFORD. Without objection, it will be.

Senator SPECTER. The comments that I shall make this morning will be very brief.

It is a matter of priorities as to where we apply the limits of funds which we have available, considering the great pressures and the limits of funds which we have to allocate in the Congress of the United States. And I know that you, Senator Stafford, and you, Senator Pell, agree that education is a very high priority item. And I believe that the objectives set forth in Senate bill 1525, dropouts reach really the critical spot and path of young people as they move with the education process, and that critical moment as to whether they will move ahead in the educational process and be productive citizens and have the advantages of education for a happy life, or whether they will drop out and move either to the unemployment lists or to the welfare rolls, or to the criminal dockets.

On the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, which I chair, extensive hearings have demonstrated the problems of the young people in this country who do not have the benefit of an education. And from my days as district attorney in Philadelphia, I recall the numerous case studies which I saw which began with being a dropout and from a dropout the youngsters then moved to the permanent status as criminals and from that, shoplifting or vandalism. From that to larceny; then to burglary of vacant buildings, and then to robbery and frequently to robbery/murder. And if the path does not lead to crime, it invariably, without an education, leads to the unemployment lists or to the welfare rolls. So that as we tackle the problems of our society, I would suggest that Senate bill 1525 is directed to the critical spot, the dropouts, and that is a problem of enormous importance.

I again commend the subcommittee for giving priority attention and urge that we move the legislation along on the fast track through the subcommittee, through the Senate, through the Congress, and to the President for signature so we can attack this problem.

Thank you very much.

[Senator Specter's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

Senator SPECTER. I wish to thank my distinguished colleagues, Senator Stafford and Senator Pell, Chairman and ranking member of the Education Subcommittee for holding a hearing on S. 1525, the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act.

I am also pleased that two cosponsors of the bill, Senators Chafee and Bradley are participating in the hearing and that Senator Chiles is also giving testimony.

My interest in the dropout problem has been heightened by the severe economic hardships which many parts of Pennsylvania are experiencing. In western Pennsylvania for example, once thriving steel towns in the Mon Valley, Mckeesport and Clairton, for example, are on the brink of financial ruin. In families where generations of fathers and sons had been able to look to the steel industry for jobs, there is no longer the hope of that employment opportunity. Rather, in nearby Pittsburgh, efforts are being concentrated on high technology, robotics, and employment opportunities which call for an educated, highly skilled workforce. In this scenario, the future is bleak for persons who are high school graduates. For those who are dropouts, the picture is absolutely hopeless.

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the dropout problem is particularly alarming. Figures for the Philadelphia Public Schools indicate that during the 1983-84 school year 90,639 students between the ages of 14 and 20 were enrolled in school, in grades 7-12. Of this total 7,996 children or 8.8% of the total number dropped out.

A breakdown of these figures show that the black/white dropout rate was more than 2 to 1, closely corresponding to their overall enrollment in school. Nevertheless, the percentage of blacks who dropped out—8.7% was only. 4 percentage points higher than whites who had an 8.3% dropout rate. Hispanics dropped out at a rate of 11.9 percent, although the actual number was only 856, as compared to 2,008 for whites, and 4,592 for blacks.

The cost paid by society when the dropout rate is high include reduced economic output, the likelihood of increased demand for unemployment benefits and welfare payments. and possible increases in criminal activities.

According to 1981 Census Bureau data, 36% of high school dropouts were unemployed compared to 21% of high school graduates not enrolled in college. In 1982, persons 25 years of age and older who had dropped out of high school, earned almost one-third less than individuals who graduated. In addition, a survey by the Department of Justice found that the majority of inmates in local jails lacked a high school diploma—59% of white inmates and 63% of black inmates.

Providing $50 million FY in 87 to assist schools in establishing model programs to identify potential dropouts and preventing them from dropping out, and to identify youngsters who have dropped out and encourage them to reenter school, is a small price to pay for the potential benefits of the success of this program.

As Chairman of the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, and as a former District Attorney, I know only too well what life holds for an uneducated, unskilled, unemployed young person who turns to crime because there is no other viable employment opportunity. I think the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act can help us turn a significant portion of those around.

[A news release follows:]

Arlen Specter

U.S. SENATOR PENNSYLVANIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Dan McKenna, 202-224-9020

SEN. SPECTER TELLS SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE THAT HIS BILL WILL HELP PREVENT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Washington, D.C., Oct. 17, 1985-----U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa) today told a Senate subcommittee that the problem of high school dropouts is costing the United States dearly in terms of lost economic output, greater welfare payments and increases in crime.

Testifying before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Subcommittee on Education, Sen. Specter said that his bill, The Dropout Prevention and Re-entry Act of 1985, would prevent many of these dropouts and encourage dropouts to return to school.

This legislation would provide $50 million in FY 87 for local school boards to set up programs to identify potential dropouts and to try to prevent them from quitting school. It would also endeavor to get dropouts to return and to get the schools to collect and report pertinent information on the reasons for dropouts.

Sen. Specter testified that the problem of school dropouts has become acute, with estimates that one million children leave school every year and that 25 percent of U.S. youth never graduate from high school. Without this education, he said, these young people cannot find good jobs or earn decent livings and are unemployed more often and for longer periods than those with high school educations.

Census data shows, said Sen. Specter, that up to 15 percent more high school dropouts are unemployed compared to high school graduates who are not enrolled in college.

To be eligible for U.S. Department of Education grants under Sen. Specter's legislation, a school district must include a plan that provides help for pregnant minors and school-age parents. In addition, the plan must provide for the establishment of an advisory council "broadly representative of the entire community and the dropout population to be served." Part of the grants may be used for setting up or expanding work-study, apprentice or intern programs.

In an increasingly technological, information-oriented society, Sen. Specter said, the future for dropouts "is worse than bleak. Dropouts who are fortunate find their way to dead-end jobs. The unfortunate ones often find their way to prison. My bill will help to prevent dropouts and make these young people contributing members of our society."

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Senator STAFFORD. Thank you very much, Senator Specter. We appreciate your testimony and you joining us in this enterprise. And I think I can assure you that this subcommittee is not known for delaying legislation which we think is valuable to the country.

We have no questions, so we again would invite you to stay, if you care to, or understand if other requirements on your time will make you leave.

Senator PELL. I would like to add just a word to congratulate you in your lead on this. And I welcome your support.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much.

Senator STAFFORD. Thank you

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

As I said earlier, I apologize for not being here at the opening, but I want to commend you, Chairman Stafford, for holding this hearing. You have exercised tremendous leadership in the area of education and as chairman of this subcommittee. Your commitment to this dropout legislation once again demonstrates the deep concern you hold for the education and welfare of all our citizenry.

To my mind, this morning's hearing is of primary national importance. For while we have focused our attention of late on the push for excellence and toughened standards, I am greatly troubled by the fact that we have ignored the needs of the student who is less academically inclined.

I am appalled by the fact that we have sustained a national dropout rate of 25 percent for the past 20 years. I have long held to the belief that the real strength of our Nation is measured by the sum total of the education and character of all our citizenry. And to that end if we are failing to educate one-quarter of our population, then we willingly place our national security in great peril.

This situation is far more threatening for urban areas where the dropout rate is as high as 50 percent. And it is far more devastating for minority populations where the dropout rate can reach as high as 70 percent.

In human terms, dropping out of school all but extinguishes the chance that each child has to make it in our competitive economy. In economic terms, the sharp loss in productivity and generated taxes, as well as the prices of incarceration, unemployment and welfare assistance, inflicts a heavy drain on our economy. It is sadly true that what we fail to invest in dropout prevention, we will be forced to pay many times over in social costs.

The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act is a vital step in correcting a situation that has been with us for far too long. Quite simply, we have a choice as to whether we will be a nation which educates only the academically inclined, or whether we will seek to make education a reality for our entire populace.

We as a nation are diminished when we fail to educate one-quarter of our citizenry. And we as a people lose when we turn our backs on a population that has nowhere else to turn.

I would like first to thank my colleagues who are here to testify on behalf of this important piece of legislation. I would also like to thank two Rhode Islanders who will greatly enrich the scope of this hearing. Commissioner of Education Troy Earhart, who has done so much for the quality of education in Rhode Island, is to be commended for identifying the dropout problem as a State priority.

And John Ramos is to be highly recognized for the very important work he has done as director of the Alternate Learning Project in Providence.

I look forward to the counsel of all our witnesses this morning, and would like to thank them for the benefit of their views as we turn our attention to this serious problem.

Without objection, I would place an article in the record from today's Washington Post, which indicates the relative economic position for those who finish college and those who do not.

[Information supplied for the record follows:]

10/17/85

THE WASHINGTON POST

Earnings Are Improving by Degrees

College Education Income Gap Widens Again, Survey Finds

By Spencer Rich
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the last five years, young people with college degrees have widened their earnings lead substantially over those without degrees, reversing a narrowing of the gap during the 1970s, the Census Bureau reported yesterday in a review of four decades of educational trends.

The bureau report also documented a substantial four-decade increase in the educational attainment of all Americans, particularly blacks.

In 1940, 38 percent of all persons aged 25 to 29 had completed high school, and the figure for blacks was 12.3 percent. By 1984, the overall proportion of graduates had risen to 86 percent, and for blacks to 79 percent.

Similar gains were shown in college education. In 1940, 6 percent of all persons 25 to 29 had completed college; by 1984 the figure was 22 percent. The proportion was slightly lower for women than for men. For blacks, the 1940 figure was 1.6 percent; this rose to 14.6 percent by 1984.

The bureau said that in 1983 the median income of male college graduates aged 25 to 34 was $21,988, or 39 percent higher than the median of those who had only a high school degree, which was $15,789. The bureau noted that the income differential, which was only 13 percent in 1950, had risen steadily to 28 percent in 1969, then unaccountably dropped to 21 percent over the next decade, but now is rising steadily. The 1970s drop might have been due in part to a glut of inexperienced baby-boom college graduates in the labor market, the bureau said.

Although the bureau cautioned that at least part of the collegians' differential may not be due to the added training but to differences in ability and demographic factors, a Gallup Poll released today shows that Americans believe overwhelmingly that a college degree is a lifetime ticket to better jobs and higher earnings.

The new poll found 64 percent saying a college education is very important, and 27 percent rating it fairly important. As recently as 1978, only 36 percent said it was very important. The major advantages cited were better jobs (52 percent), better opportunities (10 percent), specialized training (10 percent) and high income (18 percent). Only 14 percent said enhancing knowledge was the greatest advantage.

The Census Bureau study is a compendium of statistics showing trends in education since 1940. It found a vast enlargement of education—the number of people completing high school and college, the money spent for it. The study concluded that educational improvement has been a major contributor to national economic growth.

It said that an analysis of college test scores led experts to conclude that their decline in the past generation was in part due to a decline in the quality of schooling, particularly after 1970 or so. As remedies, these authorities advocated "more homework, less absenteeism, more challenging courses and higher-demand-level textbooks."

The trends in educational achievement "have made the American people the most educated in the world," the bureau said. Comparing other countries in 1980-81, the most recent years available, the bureau found that 32 percent of Americans over 24 had obtained some college education, almost double the figure for the next closest countries, East Germany (17.3 percent) and Canada (17.2 percent), and well ahead of Sweden (15.5 percent) and Japan (14.5 percent).

Senator PELL. I see we have the senior Senator from New Jersey, Senator Bradley, here. I congratulate him on being a cosponsor of this legislation as well.

STATEMENT OF HON. BILL BRADLEY, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Senator BRADLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, as well as Senator Stafford, for your leadership on these issues, and for your openness to the suggestions that noncommittee members made on the issue generally. I look forward to working with you on this bill.

I am pleased to be here today to testify in support of S. 1525, the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act.

In January 1984, as a member of the Senate Children's Caucus, I participated in a forum in New York City on the causes and consequences of dropping out of school. These hearings highlighted the seriousness of this problem for the young person who leaves school, for his or her family, and for our Nation.

Based on these concerns, earlier this year I introduced the Secondary School Basic Skills Act, S. 508. That bill would authorize funds necessary to teach basic skills to educationally disadvantaged secondary school students who, without a mastery of basic skills, would be likely to be driven out of the educational system. And as we recognize the need to raise the standards of excellence demanded by our schools, these children are even more likely to feel that remaining in school is a hopeless cause unless we can help them keep up.

This does not in any way justify accepting lower standards for some segments of our population. This would be a disservice to a significant proportion of our youth and would subvert the purpose of our educational system. Rather, it directs our attention to our responsibility for ensuring that more students achieve the level of basic skills required to function in society. This goal is not unreasonable. Compensatory education programs under chapter I have resulted in significant gains for elementary school age children. Only 5 percent of these funds, however, go to high school students lacking in basic skills.

My legislation would help develop and evaluate effective programs for teaching basic skills to high school students. Successful programs would then be shared with State departments of education along with $800 million which would be distributed to local schools with disadvantaged student populations on a formula basis. This funding level provides high schools with the same level of Federal funding for basic skills that is currently provided in chapter I for elementary and junior high schools. My legislation would force schools to demonstrate results annually in order to continue their funding.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in supporting a similar effort to reach out to those students who have given up on the educational process, or are likely to do so. The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act would authorize funds to allow schools to establish demonstration projects to identify potential dropouts, to find ways to prevent dropping out, and to help dropouts reenter school. Schools

with good ideas can apply for grants to test them. Successful prevention and reentry programs would be disseminated. The bill would authorize a 1-year study of the nature and extent of the dropout program, and attempt to identify successful methods in ongoing programs.

The number of students who begin, but fail to complete, high school is disturbing, particularly in a society that prides itself in offering its children the opportunity to become the best they can be. About one in four students who enter high school will not remain until graduation; more than half the students in many urban areas fail to complete high school. In my home State of New Jersey, over 16,000 students dropped out of school last year. And these figures on dropouts do not even include students who remain officially enrolled, but who are truant and do not attend school regularly.

Young people drop out of school for a number of reasons. Most report reasons related to their own school performance. They find themselves lacking in the basic skills needed to achieve even a modicum of success and self respect. For a variety of reasons, these students have been promoted from grade to grade without really learning the required skills. By the time they reach high school, they see little hope of catching up. They face the daily possibility of humiliation for not being able to perform simple classroom tasks and assignments. Dropping out may seem an attractive option for teenagers who are at an age of heightened sensitivity to the opinions and judgments of others, and who are performing poorly.

Not surprisingly, those who report that their grades were "mostly D's or below" were 14 times more likely to drop out of school than successful students who reported receiving "mostly A's." And students who have been channeled into vocational technical programs because they have not succeeded in academic programs are nearly four times as likely to drop out of school than students in academic programs.

Other students leave school to take jobs in order to help support their families. These students more often than not find themselves in low-paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement. Many young girls leave school early because they are pregnant. Some feel so embarrassed that they drop out rather than subjecting themselves to disparaging comments from their classmates and teachers. Some find themselves separated into "special" programs for pregnant teens that meet neither their educational nor emotional needs and serve to separate them further from their peers. Some bright students testified before the Senate Children's Caucus hearing on gifted and talented students that they left school early because they were bored. A small proportion of students also leave school because of fears for their personal safety.

The consequences for our Nation of dropouts are significant. Dropouts are far more likely to end up unemployed and on welfare. Nearly 4 out of 10 16- to 24-year-olds who dropped out of school are unemployed.

High school dropouts are not merely children who are destined to fail. Dropouts are too easily characterized as lacking in motivation. Yet, research has shown that the economic and social costs of failing to complete high school are not lost on the dropouts them-

selves. Dropouts themselves are the ones facing this plight of diminished life opportunities. Within 2 years of leaving school, about 50 percent of dropouts in a recent study reported that they had not made a good decision. Many attempt to secure education or training outside of regular high school, some through the General Education Development [GED] programs. Therefore, a significant proportion of dropouts want to succeed. We must help them in their efforts.

The magnitude of functional illiteracy in our country is truly staggering. It is estimated that 23 million American adults, and about 13 percent of all 17-year-olds have inadequate reading, writing, and comprehension skills to fulfill the needs of daily living and the responsibilities of an informed citizenry.

Functionally illiteracy may be as high as 40 percent among minority youth. In New Jersey, 800,000 residents have been described as functionally illiterate. This is unconscionable in a society that so values education and so depends on information and the printed word. These individuals cannot read a newspaper, follow highway signs, or fill out job applications. They cannot follow directions on prepared foods, let alone follow a recipe. They cannot properly read directions on medications for themselves, or for their dependent children. Functionally illiterate parents in poor families cannot read ads or compare prices to more efficiently feed their families on limited resources.

The costs to our society—in lost production; in additional unemployment, welfare and health care costs; in higher criminal activity—are far too high to allow this situation to continue unabated.

The problem of high school dropouts can and must be solved. It will not go away. Parents who dropped out of school provide diminished economic and educational opportunities for their children, perpetuating the problem from generation to generation. We must find an entry point to remedy a situation in which at least one in four of our young people drop out before completing what is generally considered the minimal level of education required to function in our society. High school is our last opportunity to intercept individuals before they enter society ill-prepared to function in our increasingly complex and demanding world.

This may be a dismal picture but it is not hopeless unless we just cease to care or fail to act. A number of excellent programs exist. The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act would assist us in learning more about why and how some programs work and would provide the means to fund other innovative programs for addressing the needs of actual and potential dropouts.

In our pursuit of excellence in education, we must be careful not to leave behind those students who, for whatever reasons, elect not to continue in school. We must commit ourselves to the belief that every student can succeed in becoming a productive member of our society. This bill is designed to help young people overcome obstacles to securing the skills they need and to become the best that they can be. We cannot do otherwise.

I strongly urge support of this timely and important legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the bill that I introduced is a little too optimistic in terms of funding levels, particularly in the present budgetary climate; $800 million is a little different than $50 mil-

lion, and that is why I have high hopes that we will be able to act on dropout prevention. It is $50 million. We should be able to manage that in terms of the budget and in terms of long-term economic savings to our society. It would, in my view, be about the best $50 million that we have invested in terms of productivity improvement, educational investment, and ultimately saving of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to testify and stand ready to work with you and Senator Stafford in any way I can to assure that this problem is not only addressed legislatively, but that more and more people in the country recognize it as a problem because, at this time, many people simply do not.

Senator PELL. Thank you very, very much, Senator Bradley, for being with us this morning.

As you suggest, $800 million is a little bit more of a price tag at this point. But I would like to see us get to your bill eventually in a different climate, maybe even in a different decade. I appreciate very much your help and your support for this legislation, and particularly your cosponsorship.

Senator BRADLEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much, and I agree with you that this problem is a serious and a long-term one. Eventually addressing it in terms of a formula similar to the chapter I formula, with some equal dollars for potential high school dropouts, that we now provide for elementary school students, would be a very wise decision. And I would also urge the committee to look at one other provision in the bill, which is to say, look, we are not going to spend taxpayer dollars unless we get results.

In the bill that I offered, we say, yes, we are going to spend $800 million, but schools do not receive the money if they do not demonstrate that they have been successful in improving basic skills, either in a reduction in the dropout rate or in a significant improvement in test scores. This would be taxpayers' dollars spent for real value.

Senator PELL. I appreciate that, and also your earlier point that high school is really the last place where you can intercept a youngster on his other course and change it.

In that regard, it is of some interest, I think, that while the national dropout rate is some 25 percent, the rate of those who lack a high school diploma in local jails, is about 59 percent for white inmates and 63 percent for the black inmates. So you can see the importance there.

Senator BRADLEY. I think you said that it is cheaper to send a child to Yale than it is to send a child to jail. And I think that is a very appropriate way of focusing on the social cost of not attending to the high school dropout problem.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much indeed.

Senator Chiles, we are very, very happy you are here. We want to hear from you on your legislation, and hopefully we can work together and work out this bill.

Senator Stafford would be here but he had to be at a doctor's appointment.

STATEMENT OF HON. LAWTON CHILES, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Senator CHILES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appeciate the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee to testify concerning high school dropouts.

I want to commend the chairman and you, and other ranking members of the subcommittee, as well as Senators Specter, Chafee and Bradley for the leadership you are taking in addressing this national crisis.

I say "national crisis" because that is what we have when 28 percent, that is over one-fourth, of the Nation's 17- and 18-year-olds fail to complete high school. In some metropolitan areas, the dropout rate is over 50 percent.

We are not talking just about an urban problem. The dropout rate for migrants in my State is estimated between 60 and 90 percent, and those migrants still enrolled average only 75 days per year attendance. Nearly 30 percent of the native Americans in the sophomore class of 1980 had dropped out by 1982. Hispanic students have the highest rate of dropping out. Almost half the Hispanic youth who enter high school do not finish. The dropout rate for blacks is almost one out of every three. By comparison, over 90 percent of the students in Japan complete secondary education.

What is the cost of our dropout rate to society and the economy? In 1981, over a third of high school dropouts were unemployed. While overall youth unemployment has risen dramatically over the years, the rise in unemployment among young blacks is unprecedented. Only 6 of every 100 black teenagers not in school are employed full time.

Between 1970 and 1983, 22 million new jobs were created. Only 19 percent of these jobs went to youth between the ages of 16 and 24. And a mere one-tenth of 1 percent of these new jobs were to black male youth.

By 1982, men and women aged 25 and older who had not completed high school were earning about one-third less than those who had graduated. Once students leave school, the task of assisting them becomes much more expensive and difficult.

One, only about 20 percent of those who drop out will enter any type of training program.

Two, only 14 percent of the male and 9 percent of the female dropouts will enter the General Equivalency Diploma, GED, program, and some will drop out of that.

Three, many of the female dropouts will marry or have babies, lessening the likelihood of their returning to school. Last year, unwed teens gave birth to 650,000 babies, and around 90 percent of such teens in my State opt to keep their babies. When you couple the statistics on single teen parenthood, with their dropout rate and incidence of welfare dependency, you get a staggering picture of the social and economic costs.

Four, a 1978 study by the Department of Justice found that the majority of inmates in local jails lacked a high school diploma, with 59 percent of white inmates and 63 percent of blacks having dropped out. Ironically, it costs a lot less to keep a student through

3 years at Miami Jackson Senior High School than to keep an inmate for a 3-year sentence at Miami-Dade Correctional Center.

Many high school dropouts will become our next generation of illiterates. In his book, "Illiterate America," Jonathan Kozol estimates that adult illiteracy costs the Government $120 billion per year. Our population of 23 million adults who are functionally illiterate puts us 49th out of the 159 members of the United Nations in illiteracy. That results in 85 percent of juveniles who come before the courts being unable to read; 22 percent of adults being unable to write a check so a bank will take it; and an illiteracy rate among black youth that will rise to 50 percent by 1990. We simply cannot afford this waste of human resources.

What is so urgent about the dropout issue at this juncture is the fact that our Nation has launched a broad-based educational reform effort. That drive for excellence must include effective means for the at-risk student to meet higher standards, stiffer graduation requirements, and to pass basic competency tests. Otherwise, we are going to see more of the at-risk students—those young people who are more than 1 year below grade level in achievement, those students who fail a course their first year of high school—opting out of the educational system.

So it is critically important that the subcommittee address this problem, and I want to commend the approach you are taking. We do need a working definition of "dropout." We need a national information network on the scope of the problem, who is at-risk, and the effective programs States and localities can adopt. The demonstration approach is wise, in these times of fiscal restraint, to try out what works and to serve as an incentive and complement to what local schools are doing. The kinds of projects S. 1525 would support at the local level are on target. We know that things like getting kids and families more involved with the school and having mentors or role models develop 1-on-1 relationships with potential dropouts have the most likelihood of success.

I am today introducing legislation that is very similar to S. 1525. The name of my bill is also very similar: The Dropout Retention and Recovery Act. You know, there just are not a lot of synonyms for keeping kids in school and bringing them back when they leave. In doing so, I wanted to present, in legislative form, some issues that I hope the subcommittee will address in moving a bill for action by the full Senate.

I have testified before your subcommittee before. I believe the last time was when practically everyone in the Senate, myself included, had a math-science bill. I want to thank the committee, by the way, for the masterful way you crafted that program to include everyone's concerns. This time, I am the Lone Ranger with an alternative. I think my proposal raises some important points about the structure and features of an effective Federal Dropout Prevention Program.

As you have heard me say before, my interest as a member of the Budget and Appropriations Committees is in seeing that we can actually tell what the Federal dollar is buying in education. Funds are tight now and they are only going to get tighter; $50 million for dropout prevention has to really trigger some change to be effective. And in the long run, if the money is well spent, we

will save. Or, to look at it the other way, there is a TV ad with an auto mechanic who says: "You can pay me now, or you will have to pay me later." Dropout programs are like that. If we do not invest in keeping those kids in school now, we are going to pay a lot more later in welfare, unemployment, reduced revenues, and lower productivity.

I would like to enter a factsheet in the record which describes the different features of my bill. I would like to briefly summarize its thrust.

Senator PELL. Without objection, it will be included.

Senator CHILES. One, the Dropout Retention and Recovery Act authorizes a phased 3-year study.

It does not seem like in 1 year we are going to learn much about the dropout problem that we do not already know. Plus, it seems important to involve the States up front in the development of a definition of dropout. We need to provide the States some very modest funds to share information on the scope of the problem from their enrollment data.

My bill also involves State advisory panels of educators, business, and community organizations serving the high risk populations in looking at the problem, its causes, and solutions.

Two, my proposal directs two-thirds of the grants to urban areas and one-third to rural local education agencies.

We do have a concentration of dropouts in the cities. But we also have some really serious problems keeping kids in school in States like West Virginia. States with large Indian populations face tremendous challenges with their dropout rate. And I have already mentioned the problems encountered by districts serving migrants.

We should allow the State education agency to compete for funds to serve remote local educational agencies that have significant dropout problems but lack the resources or ability to compete themselves. My bill would also permit locals to join together, where feasible, to compete for a demonstration program.

Three, the bill I am offering would allow local districts to craft a prevention project, or a project for youth who have already dropped out, or both, without restriction on how funds should be distributed among those priorities.

Research shows that it is awfully hard to get kids to come back to the system in which they failed. We should be willing to let local education agencies attempt such projects, but truly effective legislation to recover dropouts would require a joint program between education, job training, and community-based organizations. My bill does increase the involvement of business and entities serving dropouts at the State and local level.

Four, the Dropout Retention and Recovery Act streamlines the planning process, so the district applying can establish specific objectives for the project and define a yardstick by which to measure its success.

It clearly distinguishes what the program is aimed at—broad objectives like comprehensive identification and outreach, special services for teens, migrants, and other high-risk populations, et cetera—from the activities for which funds can be used.

Five, finally, my proposal increases the emphasis on the middle school and junior high levels. These are the years when the die is often cast as to whether a student will drop out or not.

It does so by having the local education agency target the high schools with the biggest dropout problem and the major feeder schools from which these students come. The range of activities districts can undertake is expanded to permit business partnerships for guaranteed jobs for high school graduates, collaboration with higher education institutions such as community colleges, and use of vocational education and extracurricular activities to retain potential dropouts.

I appreciate the consideration and action this subcommittee has given legislation I have offered in the past. And I am hopeful that the measure I am introducing today will be a positive alternative on a number of issues you will be addressing in preparing legislation for the full Senate.

I am sure we agree on the magnitude of the problem and the idea that whether it is called Dropout Prevention and Reentry, or Dropout Retention and Recovery, a Study and Demonstration Program for the local schools is just one piece of the comprehensive approach that must be taken. Dropout prevention, to be effective, has to start at the preschool level, with programs like Head Start and the new Even Start demonstration I have sponsored with Senator Chafee. It has to continue with basic skills instruction in chapter 1. It has to be supplemented with truly effective programs linking the schools, community-based organizations, and job training for high risk and out-of-school youth.

But our opportunity with this legislation is to focus on the critical middle school, junior high, and early high school years when a potential dropout begins to opt out, through truancy or failure, drugs or pregnancy, or delinquency that results in a pushout. Our goal for these children must not be simply to "hold 'em in school." It must be offering them the opportunity to succeed and excel by staying in school.

All too often after students drop out of school, they drop into a lot of other things. They drop in at unemployment lines, welfare offices, and prisons. Mr. Chairman, it is grade time for America's schools. Right now if we were graded on our ability to keep kids in school, I am afraid we would get an F or a D minus. That is simply not good enough. The challenge is to work toward an A.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much indeed, Senator Chiles, for being with us today and advancing your legislation.

As you mentioned, we worked together to combine our thoughts in the math and science legislation. Senator Stafford and I and members of the committee look forward to blending your thoughts with thoughts that we have in our legislation for the legislative package at the markup stage. The climate, as you know, is not too favorable for that sort of thing at this time, but we will do our best both to push the legislation and accommodate your views to the best of our ability.

We are very lucky to have been joined by the ranking member of the full committee, Senator Kennedy. I wonder if you have a statement?

Senator KENNEDY. I do, Mr. Chairman.

I thank Senator Chiles for his statement. I think it is a clear comment on this issue, and I think it demonstrates what will hopefully be increasingly understood, and this is a nationwide question. It affects not only some of the older parts of our country, but a State like Florida, which is growing, expanding in a very significant and important way. It is equally a problem there. I was listening to Senator Chiles who was quoting those figures. They are virtually identical with what we are faced with up in our part of the country. And I think it is something that requires attention, working with local communities, working with the business community.

One of the points, and maybe you would just be interested in another comment that you make about it, I think there is no question in the areas of education. There is more of a demand to ensure that individuals that are going to graduate from high schools are going to be competent to be able to really deserve a high school diploma. I think many of us are aware of the various studies that have been done that indicate that in too many instances, individuals have been given the diplomas and been able to move through the class systems for other considerations rather than a degree of competency and work. And as there is more attention given to that issue and a greater sense of priority given to that question in local communities around the country, how this is going to affect the dropout rate as well.

This is increasingly a problem in terms of dropouts. The other times we could have had additional kinds of pressure from the top. Here we are trying to deal with this kind of issue now, and what would you say about that particular item?

Senator CHILES. I think we are seeing this happen in my State because, several years ago, we had the strong impetus to start testing, and we are testing now teachers and pupils, and have a competency test that has been tried in the court. It has been upheld in the Federal courts and pressure is on to see that when you give that high school diploma, it means something. And at the same time, we are already seeing the results, that it is causing these youths and kids who are behind to say, "There is no way I am going to make it, I cannot pass that test, so I will go ahead and drop out." And it is putting a pressure on and increasing the dropouts.

We have two goals, I think, and one is to make sure that the diploma means something, to see that someone is going to be able to compete, is going to have the basic skills that that diploma says he should have. But I think it also focuses our attention perhaps where it should have been all along, and that is looking into the earlier years and seeing what we have to do about these students that tend to be the ones who do not become competent, whether they stay in to get their diploma or drop out at a later age, and see how we can deal with them. And there I think is the impetus on our program.

One other thing I wanted to say. We certainly live at a time of tremendous budget constraints. We face that all the time. I see that all the time. I do not think that it means you say you cannot afford a program like this. We cannot afford not to have a program like this. We are finding money this year for AIDS and we are putting a considerable sum of money into our budgets for AIDS be-

cause we have an epidemic, and because we know that is something that we have to do. We have the same kind of epidemic in dropouts, and I think that is sort of a dumb country that says because you are under budget constraints that you will not deal with this problem, which is a way out of part of our problem.

And we look at trade, and we talked about this before, one of the problems in trade is the absence of productivity, and we fall behind now—and are falling behind. Some of our competing partners, especially in growth, in productivity, you see the Japanese and the West Germans and other trading partners make progress while we are falling behind.

Everything in new employment now is in "smart machines." At one time, you would say there is no problem, these kids could go out and get manual labor jobs. There are not any more manual labor jobs. They are all taken, and this is the area for the kind of dollars that we are talking about, and that the bill's sponsors support. And what we are talking about here is money that we have to find, as long as we know that we are going to be spending that money in the proper way to find some good answers. We should not be throwing that money out there, but trying to see what States and local governments are doing right, and try to sponsor some demonstration projects and see what works. I think it is very well-spent money.

Senator KENNEDY. I think having you on that Appropriations Committee would be helpful, too. I look forward to talking to you again about it.

Thank you very much.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Senator Chiles, for being with us.

Now we come to the public witnesses, and the first panel is Nathan Quinones, chancellor, New York City Public Schools, Brooklyn, NY; Dr. J. Troy Earhart, commissioner of education, State of Rhode Island; Dr. Laval Wilson, superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, Boston MA.

As is the custom of the committee, the oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes, but the full statements will be inserted in the record exactly as if read.

There is a light system here that shows when 4 minutes has expired. After 4 minutes, the yellow light goes on. After 5, the red one. The committee has adopted this custom because of the pressure of time constraints, other committee responsibilities, and the number of witnesses that we have.

We appreciate very much the effort you made in coming here and can assure you that your thoughts will be examined very seriously indeed.

Since we have the ranking member of the full committee here, I think he would like to lead off, introducing his own superintendent, Dr. Wilson.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to welcome Dr. Wilson to our committee. He is assuming new responsibilities in Boston as the superintendent of the schools there. And the citizens of Boston are welcoming Dr. Wilson to that community.

I think we are particularly fortunate to have him here to speak on this issue because Dr. Wilson had a very creative, imaginative, and effective program in Rochester, NY, and I look forward to hearing about that. I think the experience that he had in Rochester will be very useful for us to consider after looking at this legislation, and I will be interested, as I know others will be in Boston, about how he intends to deal with this issue in Boston.

I want to join in welcoming our other witnesses too coming here and giving us their comments. I understand that Mr. Quinones has got a plane to catch. Is that correct?

Mr. QUINONES. Yes, sir.

Senator KENNEDY. Well, with the indulgence of my colleague, Senator Pell, I will ask you to start off.

STATEMENTS OF NATHAN QUINONES, CHANCELLOR, NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION; DR. J. TROY EARHART, COMMISSIONER OF ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND; AND DR. LAVAL S. WILSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BOSTON, MA

Mr. QUINONES. Thank you so much.

Senator Kennedy and Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, my name is Nathan Quinones, and I am the chancellor of the New York City Board of Education. I testify today on behalf of not only my own city schools but also for the Council of the Great City Schools. I am pleased to take this opportunity to testify before this important subcommittee on the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985.

As the chairman knows, the Council of the Great City Schools is an organization comprised of 36 of the Nation's largest urban public school systems, of which New York City is the largest. On the council's board sit the superintendent and one board of education member from each district making the organization the only national group so constituted and the only education group whose membership is solely urban.

The council's membership serves nearly 5 million youngsters, or about 12 percent of the Nation's public school enrollment. Our 36-member school systems educate 32 percent of the Nation's black children, 20 percent of our Hispanic children, and 21 percent of our Asian-origin children. Almost one-third of our enrollments are of children who live in families receiving public assistance, and nearly half are from single-parent families. Seventy-five percent of our children receive a free or reduced-price lunch daily.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to devote my testimony this morning to discussing the dimensions of the dropout problems in our urban schools, describing what we are doing in New York City to address the situation, and indicating why we think this new legislation is needed.

We appreciate very much the leadership taken by the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Stafford, and the ranking member, Mr. Pell, in advocating this new bill. We urge the Senate's quick action on it.

While the data in this area are often bad to nonexistent, there are many signs that the school dropout problem in this Nation is

serious, particularly in our urban areas, and may be getting worse. For example, the Department of Education in 1983 released new data that showed that the percentage of ninth graders who were going on to graduate from high school had declined in 1982 to 72.8 percent, down from 77.2 percent in 1972. In addition, the graduation rate over that period had declined in all but eight States for the first time since 1900.

The "High School and Beyond" study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics found that almost 14 percent of 1980 high school sophomores left high school without a diploma sometime after the spring of their sophomore year.

Data are also reasonably clear about the general profile of the school dropout. NCES studies tell us that higher dropout rates are associated with low socioeconomic status, poor academic performance, and participation in nonacademic programs. Dropouts are also far more likely to be Hispanic, black, or American Indian, and male.

Also, it is clear that the dropout problem is most pronounced in our big city public schools. The NCES indicates that urban school students are 60 percent more likely to drop out than suburban students and 48 percent more likely to drop out than rural students. The graduation rate in my own district of New York City is only 56.4 percent, which is not unlike other major metropolitan school systems. In Boston, for instance, only 52.2 percent of the ninth graders go on to graduate; in Chicago, only 43.5 percent; in Detroit, only 33.5 percent.

The New York City public schools have a fair idea about what happens to the 36,804 students that drop out of our programs each year. The vast majority were over the age of 17 and simply chose not to return to school. Others left for employment; the military; other outreach, community or auxiliary services; vocational or technical training; or child rearing.

What we have less of a handle on is why these students have dropped out. If the data from NCES are any clue, then it is clear that students drop out for a variety of reasons related to race, language, status, and sex. Reasons most often listed for dropping out include: "School was not for me," or general dislike or boredom with school; inability to get along with teachers; poor academic performance; pregnancy or planned marriage; inability to get along with other students, and employment. Data from the Children's Defense Fund tell us that pregnancy is a major factor in the decision to drop out for black teenage girls. The Hispanic Policy Development group data inform us that employment to support the family is a major factor for Hispanic teenage boys. In addition, research by the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research and the Chicago Panel on Public School Finances tells us that the schools themselves unwittingly contribute to the problem.

We in New York City have seen dropouts as a major problem for our school system for a number of years. Since becoming chancellor of the New York City Board of Education in 1984, I have made dropout prevention my highest priority. I have named a special superintendent for dropout prevention and issued a special call for action this school year. This initiative, called "Attendance for Learning," means: First, that every child must attend school every

day; second, that once the child is in school, meaningful learning must take place; third, where there are problems that interfere with attendance or learning, these must be identified and addressed; and, fourth, where there are successes, these must be rewarded and built upon.

Central to our focus on Attendance for Learning are many dropout prevention efforts.

The largest of these is the Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention Program, which is funded by the State legislature. This program is, in fact, my model for accomplishing Attendance for Learning. It operates in high schools, middle schools, and special education schools and programs where attendance rates are below the citywide median. My guidelines, which are more extensive than those of the State, are similar to the guidelines under consideration in your bill. They require each school's program to have six components: a part-time coordinator, an attendance outreach program, guidance and counseling services, health services, a special instructional program, and an additional component linking high schools with their feeder middle schools in order to ease this critical transition for students. All of these services are directed to the school's most at-risk population.

The six components of this program are founded on the lessons of both research and experience. We must do much, much more than get children to school each day. If we are to keep them in school—thereby reducing the dropout rate—and if we are to help them prepare for better lives, we must offer top quality, highly motivating, and individually tailored instructional programs. But even that is not enough. For many students, particular and identifiable problems interfere with their attendance or their learning. Health-related problems, personal or family crises, financial needs, and other difficulties must be addressed before education can proceed. The schools must deal with these problems, either in-house or by referring the child to community organizations or city agencies that can help.

Our new Dropout Prevention Program, which operates in 10 laboratory high schools and their feeder middle schools, is based upon similar premises. This program is headed by the superintendent of Dropout Prevention Programs, whom I appointed in February, and represents a major infusion of new moneys by the city for dropout prevention efforts.

There was also an exciting salute to this fall's entering class. Every incoming ninth grader in all of our high schools received, first, a dictionary inscribed "New York City's 1985 Salute to Graduates Entering High School"; and, second, a certificate of admission to the City University of New York, guaranteeing him or her a seat at one of the CUNY colleges upon graduation from high school.

This year I plan to work with the private sector to develop ways of guaranteeing a job to every high school graduate in 4 years. Together, with the place in college already guaranteed by the City University of New York, that would provide a powerful incentive indeed for staying in school.

A recent analysis of New York City's dropout statistics revealed just how powerful that incentive is. We found that students en-

rolled in occupational education programs are three times more likely to stay in school than students not enrolled in these programs.

These efforts in our school system are just beginning. In New York, our State and city governments have joined us in these efforts, but the Federal Government must do so as well. The legislation before this body is well within the range of the scope of the Federal role in education and is badly needed.

Mr. Chairman, let me address for a moment why I think the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act is necessary. While our individual city and local jurisdiction is making its own efforts to reduce dropouts, scores of other cities are working piecemeal and independently on their own aspects of the problem. Because definitional problems, incompatible data and programmatic efforts are so unbelievably different from school system to school system, we have—and no one else has—no way of knowing whether our problem is more severe than others or whether what we are doing is any more or less effective.

The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act which was fashioned by the Chicago Public Schools, the Council of the Great City Schools, Congressman Charles Hayes, the Children's Defense Fund and Senator Specter is not a long-term costly maintenance program—as desirable as that might be. Rather, the legislation would authorize a national study that would design a uniform metric for computing dropout statistics and would authorize a series of competitive matching grants. Grantees would have the flexibility to design their own programs, but they would be required to report results and new dropout statistics according to the common definitions. This would enable the Department of Education to report to Congress and to other school systems within 3 years about what appeared to work or not work in reducing dropouts. This would be an invaluable contribution and, as I said, well within the Federal Government's traditional role in education vis-a-vis disadvantaged students, research, information dissemination and program experimentation.

To these ends we strongly urge the committee to respond and pass this new bill. Our schools cannot continue to work piecemeal on this major problem without the coordinating hand of the Federal Government. If our Nation's teachers worked at only 60 percent capacity, we would declare it a major catastrophe. Our schools deserve no less concern, for every student day that is lost is a blow to our productivity and strength as a nation.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Quinones follows:]

Testimony on the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985 (S.1525)

presented by

NATHAN QUINONES, CHANCELLOR

NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

Mr. Chairman, my name is Nathan Quinones and I am the Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education. I testify today on behalf of not only my own city schools but also for the Council of the Great City Schools. I am pleased to take this opportunity to testify before this important Subcommittee on the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985.

As the Chairman knows, the Council of the Great City Schools is an organization comprised of 36 of the nation's largest urban public school systems, of which New York City is the largest. On the Council's Board sit the superintendent and one board of education member from each district making the organization the only national group so constituted and the only education group whose membership is solely urban.

The Council's membership serves nearly 5 million youngsters, or about 12% of the nation's public school enrollment. Our 36 member school systems educate 32% of the nation's Black children, 20% of our Hispanic children, and 21% of our Asian-origin children. Almost one-third of our enrollments are of children who live in families receiving public assistance and nearly half are from single parent families. Seventy-five percent of our children receive a free or reduced-price lunch daily.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to devote my testimony this morning to discussing the dimensions of the dropout problems in our urban schools, describing what we are doing in New York City to address the situation, and indicating why we think this new legislation is needed.

We appreciate very much the leadership taken by the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. Stafford, and the ranking member, Mr. Pell, in advocating this new bill. We urge the Senate's quick action on it.

While the data in this area are often bad to nonexistent, there are many signs that the school dropout problem in this nation is serious, particularly in our urban areas, and may be getting worse. For example, the Department of Education in 1983 released new data that showed that the percentage of ninth graders who were going on to graduate from high school had declined in 1982 to 72.8%, down from 77.2% in 1972. In addition, the graduation rate over that period had declined in all but eight states for the first time since 1900.

The "High School and Beyond" study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics found that almost 14% of 1980 high school sophomores left high school without a diploma sometime after the spring of their sophomore year.

Data are also reasonably clear about the general profile of the school dropout. NCES studies tell us that higher dropout rates are associated with low socio-economic status, poor academic performance, and

participation in non-academic programs. Dropouts are also far more likely to be Hispanic, Black or American Indian and male (See Table 1).

Table 1. Dropout Rates of 1980 High School Sophomores by Selected Characteristics:

Background Characteristics	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Dropouts as Percent of Sophomores			Sample Size		
Total	13.6	14.7	12.6	28,119	13,905	14,214
Race/ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	12.2	13.0	11.5	18,545	9,162	9,383
Black, non-Hispanic	17.8	20.3	14.1	3,712	1,721	1,991
Hispanic	18.8	18.1	18.0	5,039	2,589	2,450
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.1	3.5	2.7	426	213	213
Socioeconomic status						
Low	17.4	17.8	17.1	7,057	3,143	3,914
Middle	9.8	9.6	8.3	11,836	5,822	6,014
High	5.2	7.0	3.2	5,876	3,141	2,735
Unknown	31.6	32.3	30.9	3,350	1,799	1,551
Self-reported grades						
Mostly A's	2.9	2.0	3.5	9,507	4,148	5,359
Mostly B's	8.1	7.8	8.4	11,559	5,553	6,006
Mostly C's	18.5	18.1	19.1	5,978	3,524	2,452
Mostly D's	42.5	41.7	44.1	834	547	287
Self-reported high school program						
Academic	4.8	4.5	3.6	8,831	4,144	4,687
General	12.9	12.7	13.0	11,359	5,608	5,751
Vocational	15.1	16.9	13.2	5,119	2,622	2,497
Community type						
Urban	18.9	20.8	17.0	6,384	3,080	3,304
Suburban	11.8	12.5	11.0	13,760	6,799	6,961
Rural	12.8	13.6	12.0	7,975	4,026	3,949
Region[1]						
Northeast	11.3	13.4	9.0	6,282	3,092	3,189
North Central	12.0	12.2	11.7	5,720	2,808	2,912
South	15.2	16.4	14.0	11,068	5,455	5,613
West	16.8	17.0	16.3	5,050	2,550	2,500
Control of school						
Public	14.5	15.5	13.6	24,611	12,200	12,411
Catholic	2.3	3.2	1.6	2,616	1,167	1,449
Other private	[2]	[2]	[2]	—	—	—

— Not applicable

[1]The regions correspond to Bureau of the Census definitions. See the Definitions of Selected Terms in the Appendix.
[2]Small sample size precludes showing percents.

NOTE: The standard error of the difference between two percentages (d) can be approximated by taking the square root of the sum of the standard errors for p_1 and p_2. That is, $s.e.(d) = [s.e.(p_1)^2 + s.e.(p_2)^2]^{1/2}$, where $s.e.(p) = D[p(100-p)/n]^{1/2}$, n is the sample size, and D is a correction factor estimated to be 1.6. The above approximation generally is conservative.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. "High School Dropouts: Descriptive Information from High School and Beyond." Bulletin. NCES 83-221b. November 1983.

Also it is clear that the dropout problem is most pronounced in our big city public schools. The NCES indicates that urban school students are 60% more likely to drop out than suburban students and 48% more likely to drop out than rural students. The graduation rate in my own district of New York City is only 56.4%, which is not unlike other major metropolitan school systems. In Boston, for instance, only 52.2% of the ninth graders go on to graduate; in Chicago, only 43.5%; in Detroit, only 33.5%.

Below is a sampling of the estimated dropout rates in some of our big city public school systems:

Table 2. Estimated Dropout Rates for Selected Great City School Systems*

School System	One Year Rate	Four Year Rate
Detroit	14.0%	56%
Omaha	11.7	46.8
Portland	8.3	33.2
Milwaukee	10.6	42.4
Atlanta	5.8	23.2
Norfolk	13.8	55.2
Toledo	7.5	30.0
New York	11.4	42.0
San Diego	4.5	18.0
Philadelphia	10.9	43.6

*Estimates for 9-12 graders and ungraded students only. Data may not be comparable from one district to another due to widely varying dropout definitions and computing methods.

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The New York City Public Schools have a fair idea about what happens to the 38,804 students that drop out of our programs each year. The vast majority were over the age of 17 and simply chose not to return to school. Others left for employment; the military; other outreach, community or auxiliary services; vocational or technical training; or child rearing.

What we have less of a handle on is why these students have dropped out. If the data from NCES are any clue, then it is clear that students drop out for a variety of reasons related to race, language status and sex. Reasons most often listed for dropping out include: "school was not for me" or general dislike or boredom with school, inability to get along with teachers, poor academic performance, pregnancy or planned marriage, inability to get along with other students, and employment (see Table 3). Data from the Children's Defense Fund tell us that pregnancy is a major factor in the decision to drop out for black teenage girls; the Hispanic Policy Development group data inform us that employment to support the family is a major factor for Hispanic teenage boys. In addition, research by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, and the Chicago Panel on Public School Finances tells us that the schools themselves unwittingly contribute to the problem.

Table 3. Reasons Cited by 1980 Sophomore Dropouts for Leaving School.

Reasons[1]	Total	Male			Female		
		Total	White[2]	Minority[3]	Total	White[2]	Minority[3]
				Percent			
School-related							
School was not for me	33.1	34.8	**45.6**	**14.8**	31.1	**34.1**	**24.9**
Had poor grades	33.0	35.9	**38.4**	**31.2**	29.7	**30.0**	**30.0**
Couldn't get along with teachers	15.5	20.6	**19.8**	**22.0**	9.5	**10.2**	**8.1**
Expelled or suspended	9.5	13.0	**12.3**	**14.3**	5.3	**6.3**	**3.2**
Didn't get into desired program	6.1	7.5	**4.7**	**12.8**	4.5	**4.2**	**5.0**
School grounds too dangerous	2.3	2.7	2.9	2.2	1.7	1.1	3.1
Family-related							
Married or planned to get married	17.8	6.9	**7.6**	**5.5**	30.7	**36.4**	**19.2**
Had to support family	11.1	13.6	**9.3**	**21.5**	8.3	**7.1**	**10.6**
Was pregnant	10.9	—	—	—	23.4	**29.5**	**29.2**
Peer-related							
Couldn't get along with students	5.6	5.4	4.7	6.6	5.9	6.0	5.7
Friends were dropping out	4.6	6.5	6.7	6.0	2.4	2.7	1.7
Health-related							
Illness or disability	5.5	4.6	4.6	4.7	6.5	5.3	9.0
Other							
Offered job and chose to work	19.5	26.9	**28.4**	**24.1**	10.7	**9.7**	**12.8**
Wanted to travel	6.8	7.0	7.3	6.5	6.5	8.5	2.4
Wanted to enter military	4.3	7.2	6.7	8.3	.8	.6	1.1
Moved too far from school	3.6	2.2	2.2	2.2	5.3	5.2	5.5
Sample size	2,289	1,188	648	537	1,101	615	486

—Not applicable.

[1]Students might report more than one reason.
[2]Includes Asian Americans, only 18 in number, because they responded with similar reasons for dropping out.
[3]Includes Hispanics, blacks, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives.

NOTE: The standard error of the difference between two percentages (d) can be approximated by taking the square root of the sum of the standard errors for p_1 and p_2. That is, $s.e.(d) = [s.e.(p_1)^2 + s.e.(p_2)^2]^{1/2}$, where $s.e.(p) = D[p(100-p)/n]^{1/2}$, n is the sample size, and D is a correction factor estimated to be 1.6. The above approximation generally is conservative.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. "High School Dropouts: Descriptive Information from High School and Beyond." Bulletin, NCES 83-221b, November 1983.

We in New York City have seen dropouts as a major problem for our school system for a number of years. Since becoming Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education in 1984 I have made dropout prevention my highest priority. I have named a special superintendent for dropout prevention and issued a special call-for-action this school year. This initiative, called "ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING," means:

- o first, that every child must attend school every day;
- o second, that once the child is in school, meaningful learning must take place;

- third, where there are problems that interfere with attendance or learning, these must be identified and addressed; and
- fourth, where there are successes, these must be rewarded and built upon.

Central to our focus on ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING are many dropout prevention efforts.

The largest of these is the Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention program, which is funded by the State legislature. This program is, in fact, my model for accomplishing ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING. It operates in high schools, middle schools, and special education schools and programs where attendance rates are below the citywide median. My guidelines, which are more extensive than those of the State, are similar to the guidelines under consideration in your bill. They require each school's program to have six components: a part-time coordinator, an attendance outreach program, guidance and counseling services, health services, a special instructional program and an additional component linking high schools with their feeder middle schools in order to ease this critical transition for students. All of these services are directed to the school's most at-risk population.

The six components of this program are founded on the lessons of both research and experience. We must do much, much more than get children to school each day. If we are to keep them in school -- thereby reducing the dropout rate -- and if we are to help them prepare for better lives, we must offer top quality, highly motivating, and individually tailored

instructional programs. But even that isn't enough. For many students, particular and identifiable problems interfere with their attendance or their learning. Health-related problems, personal or family crises, financial needs, and other difficulties must be addressed before education can proceed. The schools must deal with these problems, either in-house or by referring the child to community organizations or city agencies that can help.

Our new Dropout Prevention Program, which operates in ten "laboratory" high schools and their feeder middle schools, is based upon similar premises. This program is headed by the Superintendent of Dropout Prevention Programs, whom I appointed in February, and represents a major infusion of new monies by the City for dropout prevention efforts.

There was also an exciting Salute to this fall's entering class. Every incoming ninth grader in all of our high schools received:

- first, a dictionary inscribed, "New York City's 1985 Salute to Graduates Entering High School;" and
- second, a certificate of admission to the City University of New York, guaranteeing him or her a seat at one of the CUNY colleges upon graduation from high school.

This year I plan to work with the private sector to develop ways of guaranteeing a job to every high school graduate in four years. Together with the place in college already guaranteed by the City University of New York, that would provide a powerful incentive indeed for staying in school.

A recent analysis of New York City's dropout statistics revealed just how powerful that incentive is. We found that students enrolled in occupational education programs are three times more likely to stay in school than students not enrolled in these programs.

These efforts in our school system are just beginning. In New York, our state and city governments have joined us in these efforts, but the federal government must do so as well. The legislation before this body is well within the scope of the federal role in education and is badly needed.

Mr. Chairman, let me address for a moment why I think the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act is necessary. While our individual city and local jurisdiction is making its own efforts to reduce dropouts, scores of other cities are working piecemeal and independently on their own aspects of the problem. Because definitional problems, incompatible data and programmatic efforts are so unbelievably different from school system to school system, we have -- and no one else has -- no way of knowing whether our problem is more severe than others or whether what we are doing is any more or less effective.

The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act which was fashioned by the Chicago Public Schools, the Council of the Great City Schools, Congressman Charles Hayes, the Children's Defense Fund and Senator Specter is not a long-term costly maintenance program -- as desirable as that might be. Rather, the legislation would authorize a national study that would design a uniform metric for computing dropout statistics and would authorize a series of

competitive matching grants. Grantees would have the flexibility to design their own programs, but they would be required to report results and new dropout statistics according to the common definitions. This would enable the Department of Education to report to Congress and to other school systems within 3 years about what appeared to work or not work in reducing dropouts. This would be an invaluable contribution and, as I said, well within the federal government's traditional role in education vis-a-vis disadvantaged students, research, information dissemination and program experimentation.

To these ends we strongly urge the committee to respond and pass this new bill. Our schools cannot continue to work piecemeal on this major problem without the coordinating hand of the federal government. If our nation's teachers worked at only 60% capacity, we would declare it a major catastrophe. Our schools deserve no less concern, for every student-day that is lost is a blow to our productivity and strength as a nation.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Quinones. What we would really appreciate in your oral testimony is any specific comments you may have for improving, changing or altering the legislation as presently written.

For example, do you believe in the present formula of 30 percent for those who dropped out and 30 percent to prevent those from dropping out? We would appreciate All your ideas for final consideration.

Now, we come to Dr. Earhart who is from my own State of Rhode Island, and can give his testimony in English or Portuguese, but I think we better stick to English today. And I welcome you. I hear you are doing a grand job, and I am delighted to hear it.

Dr. EARHART. Thank you, Senator.

I am Troy Earhart, commissioner of elementary and secondary education for the State of Rhode Island. Before coming to Rhode Island as Commissioner almost 2 years ago, I had been superintendent of schools in Foxboro, MA for 11 years, and prior to that had spend a number of years as an administrator and a teacher in the Dade County schools in Florida.

I would like to thank this Senate subcommittee for giving me the opportunity to comment on your bill and, in a special way, would like to thank Senator Pell for inviting me to participate in this hearing. We in Rhode Island are very proud of Senator Pell's keen interest and national leadership in education. We are very pleased that Senator John Chafee, who has demonstrated strong support of Federal education programs, has cosponsored this legislation with Senator Pell and other Senate colleagues in a bipartisan effort to enact legislation to confront the dropout problem.

Throughout my public school career, I have not experienced a more difficult problem than the one this panel is addressing in S. 1525. I applaud your willingness to deal with this issue which wastes the minds of far too many young Americans and the tax dollars of too many American workers.

In the area of school dropouts, Rhode Island, I am unhappy to report, is no better than the Nation at large since we share that incredible and persistent statistic of not graduating from high school approximately one out of every four students who enters. As is also the case in many urban centers throughout the country, our largest city, Providence, has a dropout rate of about 40 percent. The loss of these students is a most serious educational concern because we know that, together with family conditions and economic issues, poor academic performances—that daily experience of failure in school—is a major reason why kids drop out of school. Even with the difficulty school districts have in accurately counting and defining dropouts, there is almost universal acceptance that too many of our students leave school prematurely. Your legislation is a concrete step to help us discover what has worked best for these students, to design and implement new and more effective programs, and to build a national pool of such programs that can be shared.

A major asset of your legislation is the directive to the Secretary to conduct a major study of the problem to help us learn more. At the same time, the bill summons educational practitioners across the country to work harder to create and test successful programs for these students. Your call for action, even while we study the dropout problem, reminds me of a recent observation of Prof. Dale Mann of Teachers College at Columbia who, in writing about the problem, said, "Better practice ought not wait on more research. This is one of the areas in which action creates understanding." I believe the Senate's action will create such understanding.

As you know, some national experts are predicting that the educational reform movement, with its more rigorous academic requirements for high school graduation, may result in even higher dropout rates across the country. The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education, together with many boards of education around the country, established such standards. As Commissioner, I recommended that our board enact these tougher requirements because they were educationally sound and long overdue. Yet, if such policies do exacerbate the dropout problem, our educational system cannot honestly claim victory in our effort to reform American education. In fact, on this very point, in a recent article on dropouts written by a team comprised of an educator, a sociologist, and a statistician, the writers challenge those educational reformers who might make such claims to "insist that effects on potential dropouts be considered in any assessment of the reforms."

Specifically, they go on to suggest that schools measure performance not only by calculating the test scores of those who complete high schools but also by considering the lower scores of those who have dropped out. This would constitute a truer measure of a

school's great success. Such evaluation measures "would prevent policymakers from claiming as successful those reforms that simply rid the schools of students with performance problems."

We can have tighter standards—standards that provide an improved education curriculum for all students including potential dropouts—and decrease the dropout rate. We must do both. In addition to raising educational standards last year, the Rhode Island Board of Regents approved as one of its special objectives for 1986, in addition to such popular objectives as improving basic skills in our classrooms, a student retention study. We expect that the result of this special study will provide us with ways "to increase the number of students who stay in and graduate from high school." The objective includes approaches that address elementary and secondary students.

One thing that we hope will emerge from our year's work is the creation of a clear profile of the school dropout at an early age—a profile that will enable us to pinpoint potential dropouts. I am absolutely convinced that early intervention strategies aimed at prevention will be our most potent remedy for this problem. Such remedies will still require additional resources, but these resources could be more effectively targeted on the right kids as such a profile emerges.

From our State's perspective, it would be most helpful if Federal legislation is enacted in a timely way so that we can take the results of our year's work on this special objective and apply for Federal demonstration project funds to implement and test some promising practices for dealing with this difficult student population.

At this time, I ask you to consider a modification to S. 1525 on behalf of States like ours that are working on the dropout problem. Since it is the States that have been very active in the education reform movement, it is crucial for States to be involved in improving education for school dropouts. It would be most helpful to us if State departments of education could be allowed to be eligible applicants for grants under this bill. States could still be required to submit a proposal together with one or more local school districts, hence allowing the total enrollments of the collaborating school districts to meet the proper enrollment category for funding as now specified in the legislation.

For example, in Rhode Island, this change in your legislation would allow our State department of education to apply for Federal dropout funds in collaboration with the cities of Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls. This cluster of cities, with all the attendant problems of urban education, educates 22 percent of our State's public school population, yet these same three cities enroll nearly three-quarters of our State's minority students who, as you know, traditionally have a very high dropout rate.

I am confident that State involvement would lead to more effective dissemination of the successful practices within and among States and would provide a future link to special State resources that may be needed to deal with dropout prevention and reentry.

One other modification to the current bill that I would like to suggest is in the section of the bill which requires not less than 30 percent of each grant be used for dropout prevention, and not less than 30 percent of each grant be used for activities related to per-

suading dropouts to return to school for assistance, that is, the reentry process. While admitting to a strong personal bias for the prevention side of the bill as opposed to the bill's reentry activities, nonetheless I feel that the 30 percent requirements may serve neither purpose in the most effective way.

In my view, the grantees should not have to split their proposals between two very sound objectives. Rather, some proposals should be allowed to address reentry programs exclusively, others could focus just on prevention, and then some could address both if they can do both well. In my opinion, such a change would result in tighter, more focused proposals from grantees. Rather than legislate what proportion of grants are allocated to each of these purposes, perhaps congressional report language could indicate that proposals addressing each purpose or both are welcome.

Again, since poor academic performance is a key cause of dropping out, I see dropout prevention projects that help us overcome student failure in the early school years as the most promising place to spend Federal funds. I certainly would not exclude projects for those who have already dropped out or who are about to drop out, but I would sincerely urge that prevention efforts receive a large share of the funding.

In closing, again let me thank this subcommittee and the sponsors of this legislation for proposing Federal guidance to fund quality demonstration projects for school dropouts—a population we cannot sweep under the rug of the educational reform movement. Your proposed legislation represents, in my view, not only an appropriate Federal role in the interest of equity, but also a commendable and compassionate one as well.

We thank you today for trying to help us keep these kids in school so that they too can profit from being and can contribute as productive American citizens.

Senator PELL. Thank you, Dr. Earhart.

We will turn to you with questions in a moment.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Earhart follows:]

TESTIMONY

of

J. TROY EARHART

COMMISSIONER OF ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY EDUCATION

FOR THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

on

THE DROPOUT PREVENTION AND REENTRY ACT OF 1985

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ARTS, AND HUMANITIES

UNITED STATES SENATE

OCTOBER 17, 1985

INTRODUCTION

I am Troy Earhart, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education for the State of Rhode Island. Before coming to Rhode Island as Commissioner almost two years ago I had been superintendent of schools in Foxboro, Massachusetts for 11 years and prior to that had spent a number of years as an administrator and a teacher in the Dade County schools in Florida. I would like to thank this Senate subcommittee for giving me the opportunity to comment on your bill and, in a special way, would like to thank Senator Pell for inviting me to participate in this hearing. We in Rhode Island are very proud of Senator Pell's keen interest and national leadership in education. We are very pleased that Senator John Chafee, who has demonstrated strong support of federal education programs, has co-sponsored this legislation with Senator Pell and other Senate colleagues in a bipartisan effort to enact legislation to confront the dropout problem.

I. Rhode Island Dropout Rate Close to National Average

Throughout my public school career I have not experienced a more difficult problem than the one this panel is addressing in S 1525. I applaud your willingness to deal with this issue which wastes the minds of far too many young Americans and the tax dollars of too many American workers.

In the area of school dropouts, Rhode Island, I am unhappy to report, is no better than the nation at large since we share that incredible and persistent statistic of not graduating from high school

approximately one out of every four students who enters. As is also the case in many urban centers throughout the country, our largest city, Providence, has a dropout rate of about 40%. The loss of these students is a most serious educational concern because we know that, together with family conditions and economic issues, poor academic performance--that daily experience of failure in school--is a major reason why kids drop out of school. Even with the difficulty school districts have in accurately counting and defining dropouts, there is almost universal acceptance that too many of our students leave school prematurely. Your legislation is a concrete step to help us discover what has worked best for these students to design and implement new and more effective programs, and to build a national pool of such programs that can be shared.

A major asset of your legislation is the directive to the Secretary to conduct a major study of the problem to help us learn more. At the same time, the bill summons educational practitioners across the country to work harder to create and test successful programs for these students. Your call for action, even while we study the dropout problem, reminds me of a recent observation of Professor Dale Mann of Teachers College at Columbia who, in writing about the problem, said, "Better practice ought not wait on more research. This is one of the areas in which action creates understanding." I believe the Senate's action will create such understanding.

II. Educational Reform Movement: Its Potential Negative Impact on School Dropouts

As you know, some national experts are predicting that the educational reform movement, with its more rigorous academic requirements for high school graduation, may result in even higher dropout rates across the country. The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education, together with many boards of education around the country, established such standards. As Commissioner, I recommended that our board enact these tougher requirements because they were educationally sound and long overdue. Yet if such policies do exacerbate the dropout problem our educational system cannot honestly claim victory in our effort to reform American education. In fact, on this very point, in a recent article on dropouts written by a team comprised of an educator, a sociologist, and a statistician, the writers challenge those educational reformers who might make such claims to "insist that effects on potential dropouts be considered in any assessment of the reforms."[1] Specifically, they go on to suggest that schools measure performance not only by calculating the test scores of those who complete high schools but also by considering the lower scores of those who have dropped out. This would constitute a truer measure of a school's real success. Such evaluation measures "would prevent policy-makers from claiming as successful those reforms that simply rid the schools of students with performance problems."

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[1] Natriello, Gary; McDill, Edward L.; Pallas, Aaron M.; "School Reform and Potential Dropouts," Educational Leadership, September 1985

III. Need for Education Reform Sensitive to Dropouts: Rhode Island's Special Objective

We can have tighter standards--standards that provide an improved education curriculum for all students including potential dropouts--and decrease the dropout rate. We must do both. In addition to raising educational standards last year, the Rhode Island Board of Regents approved as one of its special objectives for 1986, in addition to such popular objectives as improving basic skills in our classrooms, a student retention study. We expect that the result of this special study will provide us with ways "to increase the number of students who stay in and graduate from high school." The objective includes approaches that address elementary and secondary students. (Attached is a one-page summary describing this activity taken from The Commissioner's Plan: Department of Education, Special Objectives for Fiscal Year 1986, Rhode Island Department of Education, June 1985.) One thing that we hope will emerge from our year's work is the creation of a clear profile of the school dropout at an early age--a profile that will enable us to pinpoint potential dropouts. I am absolutely convinced that early intervention strategies aimed at prevention, will be our most potent remedy for this problem. Such remedies will still require additional resources, but these resources could be more effectively targeted on the right kids as such a profile emerges.

From our state's perspective it would be most helpful if federal legislation is enacted in a timely way so that we can take the results of our year's work on this special objective and apply for federal demonstration project funds to implement and test some promising practices for dealing with this difficult student population.

IV. Allowing States to Be Eligible Applicants for Dropout Grants

At this time, I ask you to consider a modification to S 1525 on behalf of states like ours that are working on the dropout problem. Since it is the states that have been very active in the education reform movement, it is crucial for states to be involved in improving education for school dropouts. It would be most helpful to us if state departments of education could be allowed to be eligible applicants for grants under this bill. States could still be required to submit a proposal together with one or more local school districts, hence allowing the total enrollments of the collaborating school districts to meet the proper enrollment category for funding as now specified in the legislation. For example, in Rhode Island this change in your legislation would allow our State Department of Education to apply for federal dropout funds in collaboration with the cities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. This cluster of cities, with all the attendant problems of urban education, educates 22% of our state's public school population, yet these same three cities enroll nearly three quarters of our state's minority students who, as you know, traditionally have a very high dropout rate. I am confident that state involvement would lead to more effective dissemination of the successful

practices within and among states and would provide a future link to special state resources that may be needed to deal with dropout prevention and reentry.

V. Suggested Change in 30% Requirements for Prevention and Reentry

One other modification to the current bill that I would like to suggest is in the section of the bill which requires not less than 30% of each grant be used for dropout prevention, and not less than 30% of each grant be used for activities related to persuading dropouts to return to school for assistance (i.e., the reentry process). While admitting to a strong personal bias for the prevention side of the bill as opposed to the bill's reentry activities, nonetheless I feel that the 30% requirements may serve neither purpose in the most effective way. In my view, the grantees should not have to split their proposals between two very sound objectives. Rather, some proposals should be allowed to address reentry programs exclusively, others could focus just on prevention, and then some could address both if they can do both well. In my opinion, such a change would result in tighter, more focused proposals from grantees. Rather than legislate what proportion of grants are allocated to each of these purposes, perhaps Congressional report language could indicate that proposals addressing each purpose or both are welcome.

Again, since poor academic performance is a key cause of dropping out, I see dropout prevention projects that help us overcome student

failure in the early school years as the most promising place to spend federal funds. I certainly would not exclude projects for those who have already dropped out or who are about to drop out, but, I would sincerely urge that prevention efforts receive a large share of the funding.

CONCLUSION

In closing, again let me thank this subcommittee and the sponsors of this legislation for proposing federal guidance to fund quality demonstration projects for school dropouts--a population we cannot sweep under the rug of the educational reform movement. Your proposed legislation represents, in my view, not only an appropriate federal role in the interest of equity, but also a commendable and compassionate one as well. We thank you today for trying to help us keep these kids in school so that they, too, can profit from being and can contribute as productive American citizens.

ATTACHMENT

STUDENT RETENTION:

WHY:

To increase the number of students who stay in and graduate from high school. This includes approaches that address elementary students and secondary students, that recognize all the facets of the problem, and that focus on both short and long-range solutions.

HOW:

To identify, analyze, and disseminate strategies to improve the ability of schools to retain students who may drop out by:

- updating information on the causes and extent of the dropout problem;
- describing the early school leaver;
- identifying ways of responding to and solving the problem; and
- recommending selected approaches.

PRODUCT:

Achieve the objective by:

- developing a report on the nature and extent (including dropout rates for each local school district) of problem (based on literature search and examination of information from local school districts);
- constructing a profile of the early school leaver, including a description of related factors;
- developing and disseminating an inventory of successful national and Rhode Island programs, with attention to successful components of local K-12 programs; and
- planning for next phase of project.

The Commissioner's Plan: Department of Education Special Objectives For FY 86
Rhode Island Department of Education
June 1985

Senator PELL. Dr. Wilson.

Dr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am very appreciative of the opportunity to have a chance to come before this committee. I also appreciate being invited to participate. I appreciate your support of our programs back in Boston.

Like most of my colleagues in urban education, I have welcomed the spotlight that a nation at risk has cast on public education, and the opportunity it has provided for educators and education programs to be viewed with a great deal of intensity.

This report, and many others that have followed, outlined the connection between this Nation's economic and social health and conditions in our schools, and gave us substantial impetus to develop more rigorous promotion policies and provide stiffer graduation requirements. This emphasis on standards and excellence which is now embodied in State laws and numerous policies across the country is indeed healthy and long overdue.

There is one major danger, however, that I and my urban colleagues worry about, which is unless we are very, very careful, the short-term consequence of this new quest for excellence may be to accelerate the failure rate of our most at-risk youngsters and thereby push out of school the ones we are most concerned about keeping in school.

The October 16 issue of Education Week has just come out, which has a headline entitled, "Reforms Could Increase Dropouts, Study Says." This study, prepared by a task force of the Association for Supervision Curriculum Development, has concurred with those warnings, that the educational excellence movement could increase dropout rates.

I think we have to be concerned about that issue.

Senate bill 1525 would provide resources and support to school districts to help ensure that those young people most in need do not get left behind in this big campaign for excellence.

Now, how might urban school districts benefit and take advantage of the moneys provided for under S. 1525? I want to give examples from Rochester, NY, and from Boston.

Senator Bradley, I think, focused quite correctly on the issue of productivity. For too long, educational programs have been based on hope. They have been based on the desire to see young people stay in school longer or have greater increases in achievement, but there has been no tangible results associated with such projects. Today I want to talk about several projects that have produced some very substantial results. You have packets of material that I passed out. There are some additional supplemental materials that I would like to have made part of the record.

One shows clearly some data from Rochester, NY. From Rochester, we made a decision to fundamentally change the way——

Senator PELL. Without objection, that material will be received for the record.

Dr. WILSON. Fundamentally we made a decision to restructure our day for youngsters who would be possible dropouts. We took 125 seventh and eighth graders from two schools, and said we will no longer teach the regular academic subjects. We will focus on reading skills, math skills, and writing skills during the regular day, and we will increase the schoolday by an hour and a half. And

we will have a half day on Saturdays focused on those types of skills.

What was the result of that type of experiment? The type of experiment, I would hope, would be possible in the dropout bill. In one school, the eighth graders who participated in this project increased their reading scores in 1 year by 7.8 percentile points. They increased their math scores, by 38.5 percent. That is the eighth grade students in one school.

The seventh grade students in that same school increased their reading percentile points by 10 points and; increased their math scores by 19.1 points. And in the second school the eighth graders increased their reading scores by two points and their math scores by 4.7. The seventh grade in that school did not do as well, but three of the four grade levels increased substantially, thereby supporting my belief, based on the evidence, that when you redesign programs and focus on the skills that students need they will implore. Otherwise, without intervention, their tendency will be to drop out.

In Boston, we have a compact that is an effort on the part of the school district and the business community, the universities and the trade unions to collaborate and provide programs that will reduce dropouts, increase attendance, and provide jobs. At least two projects under the Boston compact have produced significant results.

In one project, a ninth grade program called compact ventures the dropout rate was reduced by one-half in our school and by one-third in a second school. And in another project in Boston, the young people who participated in a summer training program mixing remediation and work experience in comparison to the experimental group had significant increases in the reading scores and math scores.

So additional services for young people, we think, weer important and paid off in improved test scores and reduced dropout rates. I would ask in your bill that you provide the opportunity for collaboration between businesses, colleges, churches, community groups, and schools. I think that is an important feature we have found in our Boston Compact. We would like to offer it as a ready made model.

And, finally, I would ask that there be some statistical understandings across the entire country as far as the reporting requirements. We now have a lot of different definitions of what the dropout concept means and some standardization would be helpful.

I offer these suggestions and I hope that the material I have submitted might be helpful to the committee.

[Information supplied for the record follows:].

REVITALIZING THE NINTH GRADE IN BOSTON'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

COMPACT VENTURES 1984-85

The Boston Private Industry Council
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September, 1985

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REVITALIZING THE NINTH GRADE IN BOSTON'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: COMPACT VENTURES 1984-1985

Executive Summary

Compact Ventures is a program conducted by the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) in collaboration with the Boston Public Schools. In 1984-85 Compact Ventures received partial funding of $392,000 from the Massachusetts Office of Economic Affairs. Funds were awarded under the Commonwealth's "Eight Percent" competition under the Federal Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA).

The design of Compact Ventures was an extension of the work of the Boston Job Collaborative and the Boston Compact. The Collaborative joins the public schools, the Neighborhood Development and Employment Agency (NDEA), the Trilateral Council for Quality Education, the Boston Committee, and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce in citywide efforts to provide employment for Boston high school students. Within the Collaborative, PIC Career Specialists provide career education and job placement services for juniors and seniors in fourteen high schools. In addition, this year 2320 jobs were provided in the Boston Summer Jobs Program.

Compact Ventures program planning involved school administrators and teachers at Dorchester and English High Schools in shaping a program intended to improve the quality of their ninth grades. The schools were selected on the basis of need within the schools for work-study programs as well as proposals outlining commitments to cooperate with the PIC in enlisting resources in business and industry for educational purposes. Three major program features were developed

around the common goals of reducing school dropouts and failures and of improving academic achievement. They included the following:

1. Supportive services: tutoring, attendance monitoring, special staffing such as a youth worker, teaching assistants, program director;

2. Reorganization of ninth grade as a "school-within-a-school," or cluster;

3. Development of incentives to remain in school and achieve academic goals through exposure to careers and summer employment opportunities through the Boston Job Collaborative, previously unavailable to ninth grade students.

The proposal to the Office of Economic Affairs for support of Compact Ventures was planned between December, 1983 and March, 1984. Planning emphasized enlargement of the environment for cross-sector collaboration throughout Boston in addition to linkages between high school improvement to community resources for increasing employment and access to higher education for Boston youth. After funding was secured and the two schools were selected, Dorchester and English High School staff continued to modify the structure and content of the preliminary design of the program.

One distinctive feature of the proposal had been an ambitious experiment to rotate groups of students and faculty in four company settings for extended periods throughout the academic year. Faculty and company employees would conduct classes on the company sites, and students would have prolonged exposure to a range of occupations and individuals in varied roles within each company. Dorchester and English High School staff, however, strongly recommended that students who are at risk of failing or dropping out be retained on the school site to master basic academic skills.

Although school staff endorsed the use of innovative motivational strategies for ninth grade students, they felt that in the first year of the program their educational priority was to provide students with increased remediation delivered in traditional classroom settings, tutoring, and related in-school supportive services. Access to scarce summer jobs and subsequently to after-school jobs was viewed as a significant incentive and a legitimate reward for satisfactory performance in school.

Planners decided that Compact Ventures should initially demonstrate its potential worth by improving the existing structure of ninth grade schooling rather than drastically altering it with extensive use of career exploration and non-traditional approaches to basic education taught off campus. As plans to implement Compact Ventures were revised, Ventures staff concentrated on ways to use JTPA-funded resources for supportive services for improving students' daily attendance and basic academic skills. Career exploration shifted its position from the central component of the program to a resource for curriculum enrichment and motivation.

Those who planned and implemented the first year of Compact Ventures agreed that once the Compact Ventures had made extraordinary contributions to the health of the ninth grade and its staff had become established in each school, it would be possible to introduce strategies and specific practices to utilize resources in business, higher education and social services which could be mobilized through the Boston Compact. Working from a foundation of demonstrated strength in addressing a persistent problem, Compact Ventures would then be able successfully to implement sharper departures from conventional

approaches to a preventive approaches to dropouts and school failures in the ninth grade.

The most significant factors affecting the success of Compact Ventures in each school were:

- o Early and sustained support by each headmaster;
- o Organization of the ninth grade into between one and three clusters;
- o Availability of resources for delivering supportive services to ninth grade students at risk of dropping out or failing courses. These services, conventionally viewed as supplemental, are currently considered essential within each school;
- o The increased visibility of the Job Collaborative in each school and the credibility of career education specialists as they demonstrated that the business community and the school were serious in their commitment to link school performance to employment opportunities;
- o Gradual acceptance of the program among influential teachers and administrators throughout the school;
- o Strong and imaginative coordination of staff and material resources to support efforts to improve students' motivation, attendance and academic achievement;

Detailed statistics describing outcomes for all goals and objectives in Compact Ventures will be available in the fall of 1985. Early results are extremely encouraging:

- o The dropout rate of Dorchester High School ninth grade students was cut fully in half -- from 22 percent last year to 11 percent this year.
- o Academic achievement of Dorchester ninth grade students improved significantly more than at other schools: 8 percent in math, 6 percent in reading, versus a citywide improvement of 3 percent in both math and reading.
- o The dropout rate of English High School ninth grade students also significantly exceeded its goal, declining from 25 percent to 16 percent -- a 36 percent improvement.
- o English High School's ninth grade reading test scores showed improvement exceeding 14 percent.

The Boston Compact is one of many resources that Superintendent Laval S. Wilson will enlist in leading the school system in its new independence from Federal court control. The opportunity to capitalize upon the improved racial and political atmosphere that Boston has achieved in recent years is apparent. Although major changes have occurred in Boston as a result of collaboration, the second half of the decade should not be seen merely as a time for consolidating gains; rather, it is an opportunity for exerting the leadership required to turn broad-based agreements into reliable educational programs. The educational system must become capable of taking full advantage of resources that are becoming increasingly available to link school improvement and youth employment.

Compact Ventures is the first collaborative effort to translate the Boston Compact agreements into specific programs designed to address persisting obstacles that teachers and administrators in specific high schools face in attempting to fulfill their public mission. The statistical outcomes of the program offer a very encouraging picture, especially for the first year of an experimental program. Nonetheless, much remains to be done in order to fulfill the commitments outlined in the original proposal -- namely, to make substantial and imaginative uses of resources in business, social service agencies, and higher education to improve the quality of the ninth grade.

This report recommends three measures for reinforcing and extending the promising results of the first year of Compact Ventures:

(1) Collaborate more extensively and more intensively

Expand and reinforce collaborative planning for additional phases of Compact Ventures. Further planning should view current

accomplishments as first steps toward creating several methods of utilizing a wide array of resources for the ninth grade. Planning should recognize that while there no "one best way" of tying classrooms to workplaces, colleges and universities, and other community resources, it is possible to adapt a range of promising practices to the needs of ninth grade students in Boston.

What can the local business community do that can have long term effects in the classroom? This is a tough question for any community to answer. Educators and business people must collaborate extensively before the Boston community can answer this question confidently with specific examples.

Every resource needed to provide extraordinarily rich educational experiences for ninth graders is available through the Boston Compact. There is no shortage of knowledge or expertise in education or youth employment in Boston. The challenge is to focus all of these resources on collaborative efforts to make a lasting difference on high schools throughout Boston at the ninth grade level.

(2) Increase direct involvement of school people in business, social service organizations, and institutions of higher education.

Internships for teachers and school administrators in business and industry, social service agencies, and in institutions of higher education could be combined with several models for providing basic education to ninth grade students on company sites. Business people could spend time in the schools, for example in helping teachers to tie the curriculum to requirements of entry level jobs in a variety of occupations or to upgrade equipment, curriculum content and teaching methods to reflect technological and other changes.

Further program development should foster successful working relationships among high school teachers and administrators, and human resources outside of the school system -- employees at all levels of large, small and medium-sized businesses; instructors, administrators and other staff in higher education; and staff in social service agencies. A priority for collaboration in Boston is to build upon the general agreements established at the highest levels by providing ways for people at all levels of all sectors to become accustomed to working together.

(3) If the Ventures approach results in significant numbers of "at risk" students staying in high school in the coming years, avoid holding schools to arbitrary levels of improved achievement based primarily on test scores and grades in reading and mathematics.

Paradoxically, if Compact Ventures is successful over time there may be a temporary decline in overall academic achievement in participating schools. Ventures students who remain in school are most likely to have marginal academic achievement, and increasing numbers of these students will tend to decrease general levels of academic achievement and cancel evidence of overall improvements in public high schools.

Therefore, those who are responsible for reporting statistical evidence must also interpret it for policy makers in order to prevent misleading impressions and unwarranted pessimistic conclusions. The schools should not be penalized, however inadvertently, for accomplishments of the Compact Ventures strategies and practices which cannot all be measured by conventional standards of achievement.

A PROPOSAL BY SUPERINTENDENT LAVAL S. WILSON TO IMPROVE THE LITERACY SKILLS OF ROCHESTER JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS WHO ARE SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW GRADE LEVEL IN READING, WRITING OR MATH

Dr. Laval S. Wilson
Superintendent of Schools
Rochester City School District
June 8, 1984

1984-85
SIP
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT DATA
PERCENTILES

	READING				MATHEMATICS			
	N*	SP 84 Mean %ile	SP 85 Mean %ile	Diff.	N*	SP 84 Mean %ile	SP 85 Mean %ile	Diff.
SIP Franklin								
7	39	31.1	22.7	-8.4	39	44.0	29.4	-14.6
8	26	15.8	18.0	+2.2	25	24.6	29.3	+4.7
SIP Monroe								
7	36	34.4	44.4	+10.0	35	39.2	58.3	+19.1
8	50	30.8	38.6	+7.8	49	35.9	74.4	+38.5
Total SIP								
7	75	32.6	32.5	-0.1	74	41.8	42.7	+0.9
8	76	25.0	30.8	+5.8	74	32.0	59.8	+27.8
SIP Control**								
7	320	29.4	25.6	-3.8	32[illegible]	39.4	28.0	-11.4
8	413	28.3	29.4	+1.1	40[illegible]	30.1	31.6	+1.5
District								
7	1911	61.3	51.6	-9.7	1889	74.6	60.3	-14.3
8	1897	55.7	56.3	+0.6	1859	61.1	63.6	+2.5

* Includes only students with matched pre/post tests

** The control population is comprised of Rochester City School District 7th and 8th grade students who are not participating in SIP but who meet the SIP entrance criteria in terms of Metropolitan Achievement performance, report card grades in English, Reading, Math, age and PEP performance.

IMPROVING THE LITERACY SKILLS OF STUDENTS WHO SCORE SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW GRADE LEVEL IN READING, WRITING OR MATH

It is the belief of the Superintendent that the skills of many of our students must be significantly improved in the areas of reading, writing or math. The Data-Base of our District's Three-Year Plan clearly indicates that some District students score higher in specific skill areas than others. In addition, the Data-Base contains analyses which illustrate the differing backgrounds of the young people who enter our schools. It is my belief that, regardless of background, young people who have a normal learning capacity should be able to achieve in the academic programs offered in our schools. Clearly, all young people have the capacity to learn.

Of course, socio-economic status and family background do have some impact on a child's level of achievement. Students in our city, state and nation are not really born equal. They do not enter our schools with equal advantages, and they do not end their school careers with equal attainments. If this is a reality, how can schooling in Rochester make a difference?

It is folly for our District to expect to close the achievement gap between those young people who have low scores and those who have high scores without requiring additional time-on-task for needy students, or designing a fundamentally new way of educating students who are substantially below grade level. There is general agreement among educators, parents, employers, and the citizens of Rochester that the improvement of the literacy skills of many of our youth is a necessity. At the same time, there is general agreement in our community that average achieving and above-average achieving students should continue to make

academic progress. Here is the crux of the problem. If average and above-average students continue to make academic progress, those who are below level must not only keep up with them academically, but must also reduce the learning gap. This expectation is wholly unrealistic.

Generally, students who have scored below grade level in reading, math and writing have been assigned to "resource" teachers. This has been our remedial or compensatory program. The greatest success with compensatory services in Rochester and in most school districts across the country has been achieved in the elementary schools. In these schools the elementary classroom teacher is responsible for instructing students in specific subject matter content, as well as for improving their literacy skills. Reading and math teachers who are assigned to help elementary students improve their literacy skills usually coordinate the specialty instructional program with that provided in the regular classroom. The elementary classroom teacher then incorporates improvement plans into the teaching and learning process throughout the school year. The reading comprehension needs of an elementary student are frequently woven right into the social studies and science instructional programs. In addition, the classroom teacher tailors day-to-day reading instruction to the various skill levels represented among the classroom's students.

Instruction in secondary schools takes place in an organizational structure which is entirely different from that of the elementary school. Students at the secondary level take specialty courses from a number of different teachers in forty-three minute blocks throughout the school day. What is taught and learned in one classroom often has no relationship to instructional activities in another classroom. The coordination and integration of learning among subject areas is not the general mode of operation in the secondary schools. The focus of

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secondary instruction is subject matter content taught by specialists skilled in fields of knowledge such as algebra, history, literature, biology, home economics, or health. Teachers in one department do not generally plan or integrate their instruction with that of other departments.

Historically, the organizational structure of our secondary schools simply has not allowed teachers the opportunity to improve the literacy skills of needy students in the same way as we have addressed this problem in our elementary schools. Skill improvement in secondary schools has been basically an "add-on" of one remedial class in reading or math, or a substitution of a class in these subject areas for a more rigorous program in English or algebra.

Of course, the District has young people who achieve below grade level in both its elementary and secondary schools. Clearly, the District will need to continue to provide some compensatory or remedial programs throughout grades K-12. Wherever there are students in need of raising their achievement scores or subject area competency, we must provide the assistance.

A basic decision, however, must be made as to which grade levels hold the greatest potential to foster skill improvement. I do not believe that the regular secondary compensatory education program will drastically improve the literacy skills of students who are substantially below grade level. I do believe, however, that a properly focused, effective program can be designed.

My preference is to focus intensely on the junior high school. Generally, junior high school students have learned the fundamentals of phonics, math, penmanship and grammar, while senior high school students already have begun classwork leading to the accumulation of credits for graduation. In addition, it is my belief that schools have a greater ability to influence the attitudes,

thinking, and abilities of junior high school students than those of upperclassmen, especially juniors and seniors.

Many young people who progress from 8th to 9th-grade read two, three or four years below level. Minimal success will take place in 9th-grade English, science, and social studies classes if students cannot read and write close to grade level. Reading and writing competency is the key to academic progress throughout a student's high school career.

Students who need a great deal of basic skill reinforcement could be required to take classes each day after school. A condition of these students' enrollment in 9-12 secondary school classes could be their attendance in additional "time-on-task" classes focusing on improvement of skills.

REDESIGNING THE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW GRADE LEVEL IN BASIC SKILLS

A more fundamental change in the way of educating students who are substantially below grade level would be to revise completely the instructional program of needy 7th and 8th-graders. Students would not be allowed to progress from 8th to 9th-grade if they did not read and write at a designated level, such as 7.5 on a District-selected achievement test. (The specific grade-level score to be used for remedial placement would be determined at some time in the future. That score could be 7.0 rather than 7.5. One and a half years below grade level is used here simply as an example.)

Intensive focus on academic preparation is not a new idea in the field of education. Many prep schools provide a 13th year of schooling for students who plan to enter a four-year college. (See articles reprinted from the New York Times and USA Today.) I am suggesting that, before a Rochester student enters the 9th-grade, he or she should attend a local "prep program" if, for example, he or she scores below the 7.5 level in reading, writing or math. The program would focus primarily on reading and writing skills. Some math skills would also be taught. Students placed into the program would be required to remain for at least one year. The major objective of the program would be to improve significantly the literacy skills of students prior to their entry into 9th-grade.

The teachers in the program would be skilled in literacy improvement. A coordinated and integrated instructional approach would be utilized by all of the staff working with these students. The focus of the program would be to offer intensive and extensive remedial help exclusively in reading, writing and mathematics. Needy students could remain in the program for one or two years before being allowed to undertake regular 9-12 subjects.

Pronouncements about the need for higher expectations and improved achievement by boards of education, superintendents, teachers, and parents do not by themselves increase literacy skills. I believe, however, that intensive, targeted programs designed to address skill deficiencies can make a difference.

For 8th-grade students several years behind in reading and writing, small improvements will not be enough. Gains of two or three months in the 9th-grade, and of two or three months in the 10th-grade, will not realistically provide students with an opportunity to benefit from high school instruction.

It is my professional judgment that the issue of skills improvement for secondary students in reading, writing and math must be seriously addressed by the Superintendent and Board of Education. The academic progress we desire for our secondary students will not occur if students are allowed to continue to move through the grades while they are seriously deficient in literacy skills.

Thirty-five per cent (35%) of Rochester's 9th-grade students failed non-Regents English in June 1983. Eighteen per cent (18%) failed Regents English. Even larger numbers failed non-Regents and Regents math. (These statistics are presented in Table 83-D-4, from the 1983-84 Data Base.) I should emphasize that these are not students who lack the capacity to achieve, but rather students who failed to pass for a variety of reasons unrelated to ability.

Some may say that better teaching would solve the problem. Others may suggest more homework, or one more skills class each semester. Tinkering with the problem does not provide a solution. We have tried that before, and it simply does not work.

It is my belief that we should fundamentally redesign the educational system for those students who are clearly deficient in reading, writing and math. We need to say to the students: you will remain in the 8th-grade until your literacy skills are strong enough for you to benefit from senior high instruction.

SUMMARY

The City School District could continue its patchwork approach to improving the skills of young people who are below grade level in reading, writing and math. We have had some success with our compensatory education efforts. However, unless we intensively focus on skills improvement for students who are substantially below grade level, these young people will not benefit from the programs we offer in our 9-12 secondary schools. Students will not benefit from their teachers' instruction if they cannot read and understand the material, express their thoughts clearly in written composition, prepare research papers, or complete essay examinations successfully.

[Editor's Note: Due to printing limitations and in the interest of economy, certain other material submitted for the record by Dr. Wilson was retained in the files of the Committee.]

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Dr. Wilson, and your specific suggestions will be cranked into the thinking of the committee.

I would like to ask one general question if I could, which you have touched on in connection with the importance of the definition, and that is,what should be the consensus on the percentage of those in our country who do not have a high school diploma? In other words, those who are not able to achieve the intellectual requirements for a diploma? Would it be 3, 2, 10, or 20 percent? Do you have a figure that you could——

Dr. WILSON. I do not have a suggestion of a statistical number. That is going to vary so much among communities, depending upon the types of resources and backgrounds of people in those communities. In some communities they will have very few dropouts, based on the socioeconomic backgrounds and previous family history of going to college. You are going to have a significant percentage of dropouts where you do not have young people even speaking the English language in the home or in school. That has been very significant. I think we have to focus attention on trying to have as many young people in our school system who can be assisted to become very competent in reading skills and literacy skills. And I think one of the main reasons for dropping out is that one does not have the necessary skills for competing successfully and for getting good grades.

Senator PELL. What would be your reaction to that? Obviously it cannot be a 100 percent.

Dr. EARHART. My reaction would be similar, Senator. The goal, I think, is that no youngster drop out of school for the wrong reason, and I think the reasons that we have control over that lead kids to drop out of school are mainly academic ones. With the kind of strong early academic program that we have been talking about, hopefully we can reduce that figure close to zero. Unfortunately, we do not have a good track record on how close to that figure we can come.

Obviously the figures now are too high, and we have to begin doing something about that.

Senator PELL. I was struck, Dr. Earhart, by your emphasis on preventing dropouts.

Would you, Dr. Wilson, agree that that should be more the greater emphasis?

Dr. WILSON. I think a combination of both. I think the earlier we can help young people the likelier they are to acquire the necessary skills. I think by the time they get to the 11th or 12th grade, it is too late. We must place more emphasis on the middle schools, in order to mold students and show them that school is important. We must show them that school success relates to future expectations for employment and to possibilities for higher education.

I think those types of aspiration gestures on behalf of school children in that community would be very important.

Senator PELL. Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. How extensive should this kind of program be? Are you talking about developing this kind of program in all the schools, for example, in all the high schools in Boston?

Dr. WILSON. I think when you have programs that work, you need to replicate them, and with the assistance of the senate chair-

person in the State of Massachusetts, I hope to have a pilot project in at least one or two of our middle schools, in the second semester of this school year. If that becomes effective, I would like to increase the school day and I would like to add Saturday programs for a substantial number of young people. And once we demonstrate that this is a viable way of helping youngsters in Boston, I would start thinking in terms of an extensive project for large numbers of students in our school district.

Senator KENNEDY. What was the reaction in Rochester when you extended the day?

Dr. WILSON. We did not ask the parents nor the students if they desired to participate. A letter went from the superintendent in which we said, because of your low scores and the probability that you will be a dropout, you will be expected to stay an hour and a half after school and on Saturday.

In one of the schools, we got over 70 percent attendance on Saturday most of the time. In the second school, we did not fare as well. Attendance sometimes was below 40 percent, and sometimes not as healthy as we thought. I was very pleased with the results of the first year's experiment of adding on an hour and a half per day and half a day on Saturday. I think the results speak for themselves.

Senator KENNEDY. Of the young people that you targeted, the 150 or so, what was their record of staying in school? The results of these tests are very impressive, but did it give an indication that they would stay in school?

Dr. WILSON. These were seventh and eighth graders, 125 in each school. And based upon the information from teachers, there was a belief that most of those young people would be returning next year. That project continues this year.

Senator KENNEDY. Did you make any estimate as to what the cost would be, say, if you did this kind of program districtwise in Boston?

Dr. WILSON. The estimated cost of the staffing pattern to serve 125 students in each school was $200,000 per school, so we were operating with a budget of about $400,000 over what we would normally have to provide. That was because of the extra time, the hour and a half, the half day on Saturday.

Senator KENNEDY. Let me just ask a related question, and that is that we are probably in the Full Committee facing the subject.

Have you given any thought to that issue as it relates to keeping kids in school? What can you tell us from an educator's point of view? Are you better off maintaining the minimum wage for these young people, or what would your guidance be to us?

Dr. WILSON. I think we have found that the Boston Compact is one of the most successful collaborative ventures in the country between businesses, universities, trade unions and schools.

One of the opportunities provided by that compact is to provide salaried jobs for young people who stay in school and who increase their attendance.

Now, the salaries for the young people have been sometimes over $5 an hour. That is above the minimum wage. That is an incentive to say if I stay in school, if I put forth hard work to increase my grades, if I do not drop out, there is something beneficial for me

that is tangible. So there is an incentive, a monetary incentive for these young people to see that there is something out there if they continue in school.

We are finding that many of the young people who we thought would just go to work after being in the compact program are now enrolling in colleges. So there is a spinoff effect. Not only do they stay in high school, but they go on to the next level. So I would support this.

Senator KENNEDY. I think the other part of their answer would be if there was not an adequate financial incentive or award, that that might have also an impact upon their motivation, and——

Dr. WILSON. In a negative way.

Senator KENNEDY. I want to thank you again.

Senator PELL. Senator Simon, did you have an opening statement?

Senator SIMON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will enter my statement in the record.

I am pleased that among the next panel of witnesses we have a distinguished leader from Illinois, Dr. G. Alfred Hess, Jr., who serves as executive director of the Chicago Panel on Public School Finances.

Dr. Hess recently served on the task force on the Chicago Public Schools and is the principal author of "Dropouts From the Chicago Public Schools—An Analysis of the Classes of 1982, 1983, and 1984."

I would particularly appreciate your response to Senator Kennedy's question, Dr. Wilson, on what you did in Rochester. It is a fascinating idea.

In the Chicago schools we now have about a 42 percent dropout rate. Obviously that is a loss, not only to those lost students, but for our whole society.

I have no questions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, and I again thank Dr. Wilson and Dr. Earhart.

[Senator Simons prepared statement follows:]

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OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PAUL SIMON

OCTOBER 17, 1985

I AM PLEASED TO JOIN MY COLLEAGUES ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ARTS AND HUMANITIES FOR THIS MORNING'S HEARING ON DROPOUT PREVENTION. UNDER THE DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP OF CHAIRMAN STAFFORD AND SENATOR PELL, THE RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER, LEGISLATION HAS BEEN INTRODUCED BY A BIPARTISAN GROUP OF SENATORS TO ADDRESS A CRITICAL PROBLEM FACING ALMOST ONE QUARTER OF AMERICA'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS -- THE DROPOUT.

I ALSO WANT TO WELCOME ONE OF THIS MORNINGS WITNESSES, DR. G. ALFRED HESS, JR., WHO SERVES AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHICAGO PANEL ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCES. DR. HESS RECENTLY SERVED ON THE TASK FORCE ON THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND IS THE PRINCIPAL AUTHOR OF "DROPOUTS FROM THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS -- AN ANALYSIS OF THE CLASSES OF 1982, 83 AND 84." THIS REPORT PROVIDES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE DISTURBING PROBLEMS FACING MANY LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS, SUCH AS THE CITY OF CHICAGO. THE 43 PERCENT DROPOUT RATE FROM THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPRESENTS BOTH A PERSONAL CRISIS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED AND PLACES A HUGE BURDEN ON LOCAL TAX PAYERS -- $450 MILLION FOR THE 12,000 DROPOUTS FROM THE CLASS OF 1982 OVER THEIR LIFETIME -- IN LOST TAX RECEIPTS, THE COST OF INCERATION AND VICTIM COMPENSATION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND WELFARE. THE DROPOUT PROBLEM IS ESPECIALLY CRITICAL AMONG

MINORITY STUDENTS. IN CHICAGO, FOR EXAMPLE, 46.9 PERCENT OF ALL HISPANIC STUDENTS, 45.1 PERCENT OF ALL BLACK STUDENTS AND 19.4 PERCENT OF ALL ASIAN STUDENTS IN THE CLASS OF 1982 DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL.

AS THE TASK FORCE ON THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOTED, THE DROPOUT RATE MUST BE DRAMATICALLY LOWERED WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. S. 1525, THE DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RE-ENTRY ACT OF 1985, PROVIDES SOME FEDERAL DIRECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO ADDRESS THE VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS. ALTHOUGH I BELIEVE THAT THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF OUR ATTENTION IN THIS AREA MUST BE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, I DO INTEND TO SUPPORT THIS LEGISLATION WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS.

AGAIN, I WANT TO WELCOME MY COLLEAGUES TO THE COMMITTEE AND TO RECOGNIZE DR. HESS FOR HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICE ON THE TASK FORCE ON THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ON HIS EXCELLENT STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Senator PELL. Our next panel consists of Dr. Alfred Hess, Jr., executive director of the Chicago Panel on Public School Finances, Chicago, IL; Mr. John Ramos, director of the Alternate Learning Project, Providence, RI; Mr. Keith Geiger, vice president of the National Education Association, Washington, DC.

As you know, we trust you will limit your oral testimony to 5 minutes. Your full statements will be inserted as if read.

We will lead off with Mr. Ramos.

STATEMENTS OF JOHN J. RAMOS, DIRECTOR, ALTERNATE LEARNING PROJECT, PROVIDENCE, RI; DR. G. ALFRED HESS, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHICAGO PANEL ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCES, CHICAGO, IL; AND KEITH GEIGER, VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. RAMOS. Thank you very much.

First, I would like to thank Senator Stafford and the members of this subcommittee for providing me with an opportunity to comment on this very important bill. I would also like to thank Senator Pell for inviting me to participate in this hearing, and Senator Chafee for his continuing interest in the Alternate Learning Project.

I serve as the director of the Alternate Learning Project, a public laboratory high school located in Providence, RI. The Alternate Learning Project has been recognized by the then U.S. Office of Education as an "outstanding innovation worthy of replication."

According to the original proposal, written in 1971, the purpose of the Alternate Learning Project is to:

> Provide a totally new educational model for pupils in grades 9 to 12 in a community based environment with a concept of performance contracting among pupils, parents, teachers, and community persons. The project is addressed to the needs of building self-concept, individualizing instruction, and cooperative community involvement.

The students at the Alternate Learning Project have varied backgrounds, interests, skills, and abilities. They come to the Alternate Learning Project because they are looking for a caring and nurturing environment; smaller classes; greater teacher attention; choice in developing their curriculum of study; input into how their school is run and how decisions are made; a safe and secure place for learning and growing.

It is from this vantage point that I offer the following comments regarding The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985.

In Rhode Island, it has been noted that schools are a microcosm of society. This is certainly true. It is also true that Rhode Island, although the smallest of our States, is a kind of microcosm of our country. Rhode Island is a snapshot of America. Although we are not New York, we have our urban blight and ghettos; although we are not Mississippi, we have our poverty and despair; although we are not California, we have a significant immigrant population and problems of adjustment and acculturation.

Providence's dropout rate is about 40 percent generally. About one out of two minority students who start school do not finish. The functional illiteracy rate in Rhode Island is better than 50 percent.

Paced by the fiscal policies of this decade and recent reports concerning high school performance, the domestic environment serves to further disenfranchise many of our youth from the pursuit of education.

Socially, we have raised today's youth in the "me" generation where the nuclear family has broken down and ethics have become a secondary consideration.

The preceding statements are made in an effort to capture the basis for our worsening dropout problem here in the United States. However, as a distinguished writer recently stated during a speaking engagement in Rhode Island, I have not come to celebrate the problems but to look toward solutions. It serves none of us well to contemplate any injustices that have been perpetuated or created by what are firmly placed directions of our Government and general populace except as it helps us focus on remedies.

With increasing academic standards and decreasing support systems, students are falling through the "safety net" and are being swept under the rug. To curb what has been a circular process in educational policy, the current swing to the right should be tempered by any positive lessons drawn from the sixties and early seventies.

Why do students drop out? At the Alternate Learning Project, students have particularly been asked, "Why the dropout problem?" Although the need for money has often been the first excuse offered, deeper examination frequently reveals that other reasons are more relevant. The most common problems center around the home—divorce, alcohol, and drugs—used by parents as well as youngsters—pregnancy, parents disappearing or kicking youngsters out of the house, et cetera; lack of personal interest—no one at school takes an interest or understands—there is no one to talk to; frustration—youngsters feel pushed out, they feel that they are given little choice but to drop out.

Other reasons stated by students are embarrassment—to reveal ignorance in large classes; teacher-student ratio too high; not enough choice and courses of interest within curriculum; responsibilities at home—caring for sick family members, babysitting—that conflict with attending school/homework; day care needs; lack of information—once students drop out, some do not realize that they can reenter; drugs and, of course, lack of money.

I see that the dropout problem is compounded by the reality of social promotion. Students are being pushed through our school systems because they are too old or too problematic to stay in middle school/junior high school, for example. Once these students reach high school, it is just a matter of time before they become frustrated and seek other ways to employ their energies and abilities. Another contributing factor toward the dropout rate is that students are now being asked to make lifelong decisions at an earlier age. For example, if a student is to attend a 4-year college, it behooves the student to have a sense of that goal at the point of entering high school so that the myriad of requirements can be met within the prescribed 4 years. Students who do not have a career goal upon entering high school or who change their minds along the way can easily lose pace and be swept under the rug.

In addition, it is clear that certain students feel that nothing matters; nobody cares, and they know it. They feel that they cannot get a job or afford college. Therefore, high school is unimportant. Many of these students find out later about the importance of an education, but it is usually too late. High schools generally will not reenter these students. For some, the general equivalency Diploma [GED] becomes an option, but often this vehicle lowers their self-esteem. Meanwhile, if they give up on school, they will give up on other things in life.

Finally, certain of our youth are pessimistic about the society's future. Accepting the possibility of nuclear destruction as a given, they are turning in and having fun. It is reflected in the music they enjoy and in the proliferation of drugs amongst them—particularly hallucinogenics.

Solutions: At the alternate learning project we have learned over the years, building upon our original structure, evolving and developing strategies that effectively combat the dropout problem. Many of these strategies will require an infusion of resources if they are to be maintained, refined, and promoted.

First, a school environment should be safe and personalized. The teacher-adviser system is the most effective tool to that end. By each full-time teacher assuming a more personal interest in 15 to 18 students, students are less likely to slip through the cracks and their problems are more quickly isolated and addressed.

Although the teacher-adviser system is a key ingredient to a personalized environment, it is stretched beyond its capacity when a standard teacher-student ratio is imposed, 26 to 1, such as is the case in Providence today, places a tremendous strain on this very important and successful strategy.

Along with the teacher-adviser system, reality therapy and other methods are employed to ensure discipline, keep students in school, and teach them to assume responsibility for their actions.

Second, a variety of teaching methodologies must be employed to encourage learning. We attempt to move students from dependent to independent learning; in other words, we try to teach students how to learn and how to think.

As a new associate member of the essential schools coalition, we will continue to demonstrate and develop effective methods of teaching.

Flexibility in the curriculum, within limits prescribed by local and State requirements, is very important. At the alternate learning project, students are provided with a full range of academic subjects as well as career education, art, community placements, and the development of life skills. We have an established relationship with local colleges and universities that allow our students to take courses while still in high school. In addition, the alternate learning project has developed competency instruction in math and English so that no student graduates without a level of understanding that will permit him/her to function as a capable adult.

Obviously it is important for students to achieve the needed credits for graduation. At the alternate learning project, students worry less about what grade they are in and concentrate on how many credits they have. Some students may graduate in 3½ years,

others in 5 years. Everyone is not the same and logically not everyone develops according to a predetermined time line.

Nontraditional courses, such as a psychology course entitled "Teenagers and Their Problems" are well received and give youngsters an opportunity to share their concerns.

Internships—community placements—give students an opportunity to gain practical knowledge and understand the connections between education and life beyond the classroom. Today, the adoption of the alternate learning project by Fleet National Bank will be made official. As part of its potential, this adopt-a-school project, promoted by the local chamber of commerce, will assist us in providing internships for students.

Maintaining small classes wherever possible is very important to personalized instruction. Again, the 26-to-1 ratio poses a serious obstacle to pursuing a successful proven strategy.

Adequate supplies—books, et cetera—are important to learning but too often not available in urban schools. Present budgets are consumed by salaries and housing expenses.

We learned long ago that support services are key to keeping students in school. The alternate learning project once had a babysitting service which allowed young mothers to obtain a high school diploma. When Federal funding ran its course, the program had to be dropped. As a consequence, we have to turn away young mothers each year.

We have come to understand that some form of mental health support service is important to many potential dropouts; counseling that goes beyond what a guidance counselor or teacher-adviser can provide. We are continuing to research this finding.

While proven programs and strategies are remembered as we consider educational reform in the eighties, we should also remember one other lesson. We should remember the importance of opportunity—equal opportunity. This fundamental right, pursued by Dr. Martin Luther King and many others, was intended for all and that it might extend from generation to generation.

In this regard, I cannot help but wonder if my children will have the same opportunities to achieve even what I have. I am an Upward Bound graduate. I attended Brown University courtesy of a Pell grant and other assistance. Given the cost of Brown University today, coupled with the decreasing dollars accessible to the general public, I will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to send my children there.

More to the point, initiatives such as S. 1525 offer opportunity. This bill is not a giveaway program, but a facilitating one. As Rhode Island pursues a very sound basic education program, advanced by Commissioner J. Troy Earhart, which provides structure, this bill will provide dollars to assist students in being successful within that structure.

Conclusion: At the heels of planned economic renewal comes the need for a renewed investment in America's people. Recent times have shown our Government investing far too little directly to youth in public education, particularly urban education. Valuable resources, human minds are being wasted, Human potential is being stifled. The possible contributions of our youth are being lost and our society is suffering.

A priority must be set by our Government in order to combat the dropout problem. Only as a priority in our national agenda will full change be realized. Just as FDR, in the New Deal, set economic regeneration as a priority and achieved it, or as John F. Kennedy held out putting a man on the moon during the sixties as a priority and achieved it, so taking on and improving public education must be pursued with all due speed.

I implore this Senate subcommittee to set the wheels in motion by passing S. 1525. By so doing, Americans will be encouraged to have a renewed investment in themselves and the spirit and will to do that once paced this country will be rekindled.

[Information supplied for the record follows:]

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

- Providence's only public high school maintained as an educational laboratory for the school system at large
- An Upward Bound Target School
- Nationally acclaimed by the Office of Education
- One of the longest operating alternative schools in the United States
- Recipient of the United States Office of Education Pacesetter Award as an "outstanding innovation worthy of replication"

Admissions - There are 175 students in ALP. Any Providence resident of high school age is eligible to apply. Students are drawn by lottery. However, the school maintains a proportionate representation of minority groups and socio-economic class, as well as a balance of male and female.

Students - The students at ALP have varied backgrounds, interests, skills and abilities. They come to ALP because they are looking for:
- a caring and nuturing environment
- smaller classes
- greater teacher attention
- choice in developing their Curriculum of Study
- input into how their school is run and how decisions are made
- a safe and secure place for learning and growing

The Staff - ALP has 8 full time staff, a Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant. This staff is supplemented by various professionals (potters, painters, sculptors), college interns, and others teaching on a part-time basis. A limited and select number of volunteers also participate in the program.

The Studies - The overall aim of the curriculum is to help move students from a dependent to an independent learning process. Students are provided with a full range of academic subjects as well as Career Education, community placements, and the development of life skills. We have an established relationship with local colleges and universities that allow our students to take courses while still in high school. In addition, ALP has developed competency instruction in math and English so that no student graduates without a level of understanding that will permit him/her to function as a capable adult.

Other Important Facts -

- ALP sends approximately 50-60% of its graduates to post-secondary schools and colleges
- ALP has always had proportionately fewer suspensions and discipline problems than any other Providence High School
- Each year ALP has an average of 200 students on its waiting list

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Mr. Ramos.

Dr. Hess, we will be glad to hear from you.

Dr. HESS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Stafford, Senator Pell, members of the committee, I am Fred Hess, executive director of the Chicago Panel on Public School Finances. I want to thank you for this opportunity to share with you our insights into the problems of dropouts from the public school systems of this land. I commend you for your concern about this problem and for your efforts to help provide some solutions.

Last spring, the Chicago Panel released an exhaustive study tracking over 100,000 individual students in the graduating classes of 1982, 1983, and 1984. This study, "Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools," was funded by the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation. Nine percent of the students transferred out of the Chicago public school system. Of those who remained, only 57 percent graduated. Forty-three percent of all entering freshmen dropped out short of graduation. When more than two of every five students do not make it through high school, we have a catastrophic problem. It is a human tragedy in terms of reduced life opportunities for these youth. But it is also a major social problem for our Nation.

Dropouts disproportionately receive welfare and unemployment transfer payments, are significantly more involved in the high cost of crime and, because of reduced lifetime earnings, contribute significantly lower taxes to Federal, State, and local governments. We calculated the lifetime social costs of the 12,804 dropouts from the Chicago Class of 1982 at over $2.5 billion in transfer payments, crime costs, and lost taxes. Furthermore, these dropouts are adding to the ranks of those people who are becoming a permanent underclass in this country.

But getting a handle on the dropout problem is not easy. School districts have not kept records in a way that facilitates such analyses. The first problem is in determining a uniform definition of who is a dropout. Is a young woman who leaves school to have a baby a dropout? Is a young person who leaves to take a job a dropout? Is a person who enlists in the armed forces a dropout? Is a student who transfers to a beauty school a dropout? Until this year, none of these students was considered a dropout in Chicago, with the result that one high school, Crane, could claim a 1.9-percent dropout rate, though we found that 63 percent of its entering students left without graduating. It is this disparity between official records and on-site reality observed by parents and community residents which adds to popular despair about the public schools. For our study, we defined a dropout as a person who, before graduating, left the public schools without a valid transfer. I am happy to announce that the Chicago Public Schools has revised its official leave codes to reflect that definition.

The second problem in determining the scope of the dropout problem is in the method of determining a figure. Most school districts that report figures provide annual statistics which divide the number of students recorded as dropping out by the total high school enrollment, usually producing single digit dropout rates. A more realistic picture is provided by taking a longitudinal approach, tracking each class as it enters high school to determine what percentage graduate and what percent drop out. This pro-

CHICAGO PANEL ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCES

DROPOUTS FROM

THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

An Analysis of the Classes of:

1982 - 1983 - 1984

G. Alfred Hess, Jr.
Primary Investigator

Diana Lauber
Research Assistant

April 24, 1985

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY
FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

DROPOUTS FROM
THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

An Analysis of the Classes of:

1982 - 1983 - 1984

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

Much has been written recently about the Dropout Problem in the Chicago Public Schools. The recent set of reports began with the Citizens Schools Committee's Consumers Guide to Chicago Public High Schools, which portrayed the class enrollment picture for each Chicago High School as a guide to parents about schools with high dropout problems. Father Charles Kyle followed with his doctoral dissertation focusing on two predominantly Hispanic schools (Wells and Clemente). More recently, Designs for Change released a report combining their analysis of the reading scores of graduating seniors with student completion rates at individual schools. (The Chicago Reporter had earlier published its own investigation of the Dropout Problem.) All of these reports used the same methodological approach, comparing the number of graduates with the number of enrolled freshmen. Without access to specific individualized data, this enrollment approach is the best approximation available to outside groups. It cannot discern the effects of students who transfer out of the system, or of the inflation of the size of the freshman class by students retained in that grade from the previous entering classes (as high as 50% at some schools), nor does it account for the students still actively enrolled after their colleagues graduate. Thus, the statistical base of these studies is reliable only at very gross levels. Further, such an approach provides no correlations between students outcomes and the characteristics of the students. State of Illinois student attrition statistics suffer from the same methodological shortcomings.

Traditionally, the Chicago Board of Education has reported Dropout Rates by calculating the number of students recorded explicitly as "Dropouts" as a percentage of all enrolled students (whatever their grade) for that year. The narrow definition of a "Dropout" unrealistically understates the scope of the problem, allowing school officials to use other classifications (e.g., "enlisted", "left because pregnant") to minimize their Dropout Rate. Further, such an approach gives the observer an instant snapshot, but the phenomenon being pictured is actually a four year long process. To adequately represent the Dropout Rate, all categories of leaving school before graduation must be combined, and a longitudinal approach must be employed.

This study takes exactly such an approach. It has been a joint venture between the Chicago Panel on Public School Finances, an independent, non-profit coalition of agencies dedicated to quality public education, and the Department of Research and Evaluation of the Chicago Board of Education. This joint venture combined the public interests of observer organizations and the vast array of student information maintained by the school system, without compromising the confidentiality of any student.

The study tracks all entering freshmen who entered a Chicago Public High School as part of the graduating classes of 1982, 1983, and 1984. It tracks each student's entry, whether or not he/she transferred to another Chicago Public High School, transferred out of the Chicago system, graduated, or dropped out. The study also indicates how many students are still actively enrolled after their colleagues have graduated (about 10%, most of whom finish their high school career within two and a half years of their originally projecrted graduation date). Thus, this method of calculating the Dropout Rate is much more exact than enrollment-based estimates, specifically excluding retained students from previous classes, and specifying the extent of transfers out of the system and students still actively enrolled after the graduation date of their classmates.

Some problems still remain. Computer generated data always suffer from human error in data entry. Thus, some student records are missing information about their gender, others about the individual's race, others on reading scores, etc. However, the number of such missing codes is quite low, for most categories. A more serious problem is encountered in dealing with recorded transfers out of the system. A visual examination of these codes revealed a number of recorded transfers to non-existent destinations or non-accredited or non-school destinations. All such improper codings were manually converted to the status of Dropout for this study. But, even for students transferred to what appear to be valid, accredited destinations, the Board of Education has not verified that all of these actually enrolled at their projected destinations. We recommend that, from this time forward, all students recorded as transfers be verified as enrolled in another accredited high school or be reclassified as a Dropout, for reporting purposes. The Council of Great City Schools recommended such verification be accomplished within 45 days. However, even if 20% of the students recorded as transfers in this study did not arrive, the Dropout Rate would change by less than 1%. Finally, a longitudinal study is only finalized when all students have completed their high school careers. We found that a final cut-off date of September 30th, two years after a class' graduation date, reduces the number of still actively enrolled students to under one-half of one percent (0.5%). This means that final figures for the Class of 1983 and the Class of 1984 will not be available for some time. However, we also found that the Dropout Rate does not vary significantly from the September after graduation, if those actively enrolled are excluded; thus, proximate figures are available for those years.

The Findings and Recommendations of this study are spelled out in the following pages at some length. They may be summarized in this way: The Dropout Rate for the Class of 1982 was 43%, with similar figures estimated for 1983 and 1984. Hispanics and Blacks are most likely to dropout, with overage males with low reading scores, most at risk. The Transfer Rate for students leaving the Chicago Public School system was 9%. Dropout Rates at the city's 63 high schools varied considerably, with the lowest rates at the schools with the students entering with the best reading scores and the fewest overage students. The schools with the worst Dropout Rates lose more than 50% of their students, and even the mid-range schools are significantly below the national average in percent completing school. Rapid racial change did not significantly affect the outcomes of students studied in this project. If all of the Dropouts had been retained until graduation, the cost to the system would have been an additional $3.5 million. It is the conclusion of this study that the Chicago Public School System operates a two-tiered high school system which concentrates dropout prone students into inner city Black and Hispanic high schools.

The recommendations included in this study are as follows:

1. A new curricular approach and additional educational services must be developed for high school students whose needs and interests are not now being well served.
2. A major assault on the Dropout Problem should be focused on the elementary schools.
3. Dropout reduction efforts should focus on bringing elementary students' reading levels up to the normal range.
4. Increased use of grade retention will likely be counter-productive and should not be considered as a way to reduce the Dropout Rate.
5. Special focus must be given to schools which do not do as well as expected with the students they receive.
6. The Board of Education should move immediately to adopt new data management procedures for recording, verifying, and reporting student outcome information similar to the one developed for this study.

FINDINGS

1. THE DROPOUT RATE IN THE CLASS OF 1982 WAS 43%.

The Dropout Rate in the Chicago Public Schools in the Class of 1982 was 43%. This means that, exclusive of transfers to other accredited high schools outside of the Chicago school system, more than two out of every five entering students left school before graduation. The Graduation Rate is the reciprocal of this figure, 57%.

2. HISPANICS AND BLACKS ARE MOST LIKELY TO DROP OUT. AMONG THESE GROUPS, MALES WHO ENTER HIGH SCHOOL OVERAGE AND WITH BELOW NORMAL READING SCORES, ARE MOST AT RISK.

Among the major racial groups in Chicago, Hispanics (47%) and Blacks (45%) had the highest proportion of students drop out. Whites had 35% drop out, but only 19% of Asians did so. Nearly half of all males (49%) drop out, and more than a third of all females (36%) who entered high school in September 1978 left school before graduation. Hispanic males had the highest Dropout Rates (54%), followed closely by Black males (53%). The older a student is when entering high school, the more likely he/she is to drop out; sixteen year olds (two years over normal entry age) had a 69% Dropout Rate, while fifteen year olds (one year overage) drop out at a 60% rate. A quarter of all entering students (26%) enter high school overage. Hispanic overage students dropout less frequently (60% for 16 year olds) than do overage Black students (77%). The more poorly prepared a student is, the more likely it is he/she will drop out; two-thirds of all Dropouts entered high school with reading scores more than two years below normal or missing reading scores. Of the entering class, 53% had reading scores missing or below normal levels. Thus, Hispanic and Black male students, who enter high school overage and with below normal reading scores are most likely to drop out.

3. HALF OF THE REPORTED TRANSFERS WERE IMPROPERLY RECORDED AND MUST BE CONSIDERED DROPOUTS. CORRECTING FOR THIS FACTOR, THE TRANSFER RATE OUT OF THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM INTO ACCREDITED HIGH SCHOOLS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS WAS AT MOST 9%.

To date, the Chicago Public Schools have not consistently verified the enrollment of students transfering to other school jurisdictions from the Chicago Public Schools. This makes the use of the "Transfer" leave code subject to abuse by high school principals, counselors, and clerks. A visual examination of transfer destinations revealed a high number of improperly recorded transfers (e.g., to non-degree granting trade training programs or the armed services); these students were reclassified as Dropouts for this analysis. Nine percent

of all entering students were reported to have transfered out of the Chicago Public Schools to other accredited high schools. Transfers have been excluded from Dropout and Graduation Rates. Because the school system currently does not verify the arrival of these transfers, it is impossible to know the outcomes for these students. It is estimated on the basis of our examination that as many as 20% of the remaining Transfers never arrive at their school destination, and should be considered Dropouts. This would raise the Dropout Rate by less than 1%, and decrease the Graduation Rate correspondingly. If as many as 50% did not arrive, the rates would change by two and one half percent.

4. THE PANEL COMPARED STUDENT OUTCOMES FOR THE CLASSES OF 1982, 1983, AND 1984. A NEW PROMOTION POLICY HAS CREATED AN ARTIFICIAL DECREASE IN THE DROPOUT RATE FOR THE CLASS OF 1984. THE EFFECT OF THIS POLICY IS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH LOW READING SCORES (DROPOUT PRONE STUDENTS) FOR THIS ONE CLASS ONLY.

When the Classes of 1982, 1983, and 1984 were compared, the Dropout Rate decreased each year, reaching 40% in 1984. However, the Class of 1984 was the first class affected by a new promotion policy which retained low achieving students in elementary school, thus artificially reducing the number of normal aged students entering high school in this class; correspondingly, this policy raised reading scores for the entering class. The resulting decrease in the number of Dropouts which appears in our data was more evident in males, whose rate decreased almost four percentage points (to 46%). Decreases were largest for Hispanics (to 43%) and Blacks (to 42%). The proportion of the entering class who were Hispanic increased by about two percentage points, while the percent Black and White decreased proportionately. The percentage of overage students increased from 26% to 29%; but this proportional change was as a result of decreases in the number of 14 year olds entering high school, not from increases in the number of overaged entrants. It would be expected that the entering Class of 1985 would also show a higher proportion of overage students, this time reflecting higher numbers of that age group. Offsetting these apparent increases in the proportion of students at higher risk, the reading scores of entering students also increased; a higher proportion of entering students in the Class of 1984 read at or above normal levels, as would be expected if low achieving students were retained in elementary school. Because about 10% of all high school students take more than four years to complete their high school careers, final Dropout and Graduation Rates, for longitudinal studies, cannot be accurately established until two years after a class graduates. This fact, together with the effect of the new promotion policy, means that the rates for 1983 and 1984 must be treated cautiously.

5. STUDENTS WHO REMAIN AT ONE SCHOOL FOR THEIR ENTIRE HIGH SCHOOL CAREER DROP OUT MUCH LESS FREQUENTLY THAN THOSE WHO TRANSFER FROM ONE CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL TO ANOTHER.

The Dropout Rate for students who stay at the high school in which they originally enrolled (40%) was slightly lower than the systemwide rate (43%). The Dropout Rate for students who transferred within the system to another Chicago high school was 16% higher at 56%. Thus, the students who transferred from one high school to another in the system, were more likely to become Dropouts. This differing pattern has implications for special attention when transfering students are received at a high school. Students at predominantly White schools and all-Black schools with the highest Dropout Rates transferred the least. For the most stable schools, the Dropout Rate for transferring students was 22% higher than for students who stayed at those schools.

6. THE NET FINANCIAL COST OF RETAINING ALL DROPOUTS UNTIL GRADUATION WOULD BE AN ADDITIONAL $3.5 MILLION.

Students drop out in increasing numbers as each year of high school passes. By the end of the first year, 7% have dropped out; after two years, another 28%; after three, 30% more; with the final 35% dropping out in their fourth year or later. If all of the Dropouts in the Class of 1982 had remained in school until graduation, the additional costs for teachers, supplies, transportation, and food would have reached $17.4 million, at current costs. However, had those students remained to graduation, they would also have generated additional revenues in state aid and reimbursements totalling $13.9 million. At current cost levels, the net additional cost of eliminating the Dropout problem would be $3.5 million. The Board's estimated costs of a Dropout Prevention plan would add $18.8 million, for total costs of $22.3 million. Against that figure, total lifetime costs to society of the 12,804 Dropouts of the Class of 1982 were estimated to be $451 million in lost tax revenues, welfare payments and the costs of crime.

SCHOOL LEVEL FINDINGS

Sixty-three high schools were analyzed for the classes entering in September 1978, 1979, and 1980. The characteristics of students attending these schools vary significantly by entry age, race, reading scores, and areas of residence in the city. These schools have varied programs for dealing with students: some are technical schools with high scholastic entry requirements, some are vocational schools, some are specialized schools, but most are general high schools. Similarly, these schools have varying success in educating their students. Two primary measures of their success are the Dropout rate and the Graduation rate.

7. THE 21 SCHOOLS WITH THE HIGHEST GRADUATION RATES (THE TOP THIRD OF ALL HIGH SCHOOLS) ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY HALF OF ALL GRADUATES IN THE CLASS OF 1982.

Forty-seven percent of the graduates in the Class of 1982 graduated from just 21 schools, and only a quarter of the students from these schools dropped out. Of these schools, 18 graduated more than two-thirds of their 1978 entering class. Five schools, Bogan, Lane, Taft, Young, and Kenwood, graduated more than 80% of their students. In the top 21 schools, 80% of students completed their high school career at the same school they entered, and students who stay at the same school graduate much more frequently than those who transfer to another Chicago high school. Two of these 21 schools are the system's elite technical schools, six are vocational high schools, and 13 are general high schools.

8. THE SCHOOLS WITH THE HIGHEST GRADUATION RATES RECEIVE THE STUDENTS WITH THE HIGHEST READING SCORES.

The students who entered the top 21 schools differ significantly from systemwide norms. Few of these students (only 13%, half the systemwide norm of 26%) entered high school overage(15 years old or older). 72% of the students entering these schools read at, or above, normal rates. The racial distribution of these students was disproportionately White(34%), with fewer Blacks(57%) and half the average rate of Hispanics(6%). At three of these schools more than 80% of the entering class was White, and eight had a majority of White students in the entering class. At seven of the schools, the entering class was more than 95% Black, while a total of ten had a majority of entering students who were Black. Only Richards Vocational was predominantly (46%) Hispanic, and it was 100% female. Nine of these 21 schools are located on the Fringe of the city, and four are in Lakefront districts. Eight are located in the Inner City, but of these, six are vocational or magnet schools, drawing students from beyond the neighborhoods in which they are located.

9. THE SCHOOLS WITH THE HIGHEST DROPOUT RATES LOSE MORE THAN 50% OF THEIR STUDENTS AS DROPOUTS.

The 21 schools with the highest Dropout Rates all have more dropouts than graduates, and account for 49% of all dropouts from the system. Together, they had 56% of their entering students drop out, and graduated only 44%. Two of these schools are vocational high schools and the rest are general high schools.

10. THE SCHOOLS WITH THE HIGHEST DROPOUT RATES RECEIVE THE STUDENTS WITH THE LOWEST READING SCORES.

The students who attended these 21 schools also differ significantly from systemwide norms. More than a third of their entering students entered high school overage. One of these schools had over 50% of the entering class overage. Seventy percent of the students entering these schools had below normal or were missing reading scores. Two schools had more than four-fifths of their students in this category(Austin, 82%, and Manley, 80%). These students were disproportionately Black(76%); 18% were Hispanic, and only 6% were White. Only one school was majority White, and 16 of the 21 were more than 99% minority. Three schools had a majority of their entering students who were Hispanic(#9--Clemente, #10--Wells, and #21--Juarez). The eight schools with the worst dropout rates were all 99% Black. All but three of these 21 schools are in Inner City Districts and two of the three were in Inner City neighborhoods on the edges of Fringe or Lakefront districts.

11. THE MID-RANGE SCHOOLS PLOD ALONG

The 21 schools in the mid-range between the best schools and the worst are very close to citywide norms. Their composite Dropout Rate (45%) is just above the median(43%). Nationwide, 73% of high school students graduate from high school. Thus, the Dropout Rate, as it has been calculated in this study, is 18% above this national norm for these mid-range schools. The students attending these schools resemble the norms for the system. The distribution of normal age to overage entrants is average for the system(27% overage). 58% of the students attending these schools read below normal rates or had no test scores. Half the schools were in the Inner City and half were on the city Fringe or Lakefront. Racially, however, this group was more heavily White(28%), with fewer Blacks(53%). Six of these schools had a majority White entering class, seven were all Black, and five others were majority Black, three were predominantly Hispanic.

12. AMONG THE SCHOOLS WITH THE HIGHEST DROPOUT RATES IN 1982, THE DROPOUT RATE DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY AT SOME AND INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY AT OTHERS FOR THE CLASS OF 1984. IN PART, THESE CHANGES REFLECT DIFFERENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROMOTION POLICY, WHICH CREATED AN ARTIFICIAL DECLINE IN THE SYSTEMWIDE DROPOUT RATE.

At the school level, the largest reductions of the Dropout Rate occurred at Fenger (-16%), Englewood (-12%), and Harlan (-10%), all schools among the group with the highest Dropout Rates for the Class of 1982 and all with high levels of students with Below Normal reading scores in the Class of 1982. Of the 14 schools which reduced their Dropout Rates by more than 5%, eleven were all-minority schools. Nine of these schools had received high proportions of Below Normal reading entrants and nine had Dropout Rates above 50% for the Class of 1982. Thus, these schools were the ones most likely to be affected by the new promotion policy. At ten schools, the Dropout Rate rose by more than 5%. There was virtually no change in the Transfer Rate, systemwide, but at five schools, all majority minority, the Transfer Rate increased by more than 5%.

13. RAPID CHANGE IN THE RACIAL COMPOSITION OF SCHOOLS HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES.

The Racial composition of the Class of 1984 when it entered high school was not significantly different from that of the Class of 1982, except for a significant reduction in White 14 year old entrants. But a new desegregation plan, adopted after the Class of 1984 had begun high school, did create significant school-wide change at a number of schools. Outcomes for Whites and Blacks entering these changing schools in the Class of 1984 did not vary significantly from the Class of 1982. The Hispanic Dropout Rate at these schools declined slightly.

CONCLUSION: THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OPERATES A TWO-TIERED HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM WHICH CONCENTRATES DROPOUT PRONE STUDENTS INTO INNER CITY BLACK AND HISPANIC HIGH SCHOOLS.

The picture that begins to emerge is that the Chicago Public Schools have two separate and distinct systems:

--High schools for the best prepared students, located in middle-class neighborhoods or drawing the best achieving students away from Inner City neighborhood schools, and

--High schools for the Inner City which receive a disproportionately high number of overage students reading below normal levels.

It appears that, for the freshmen entering high school in September 1978, the system was functioning under an operative policy of EDUCATIONAL TRIAGE, in which some schools were designed to save the best students, some were designed to be holding pens for the worst prepared students, and a small mid-range just plodded along.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A NEW CURRICULAR APPROACH AND ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES MUST BE DEVELOPED FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHOSE NEEDS AND INTERESTS ARE NOT NOW BEING WELL SERVED.

For the last few years, the emphasis has been upon creating excellent academic programs at some schools which have become attractive to the best achieving students. However, this has created a high school system in which the best prepared students congregate into these most attractive schools and poorly prepared students are abandoned in, and drop out from, the worst schools. A new approach must be taken for the schools receiving these poorly prepared students, if the Dropout Rate is to be reduced. A whole new curriculum is required for those students, a curriculum which will include basic literacy and skills needed for jobs in a changing economy and which is geared to the socio- economic background of these poorly prepared students. High schools must adapt to serve the needs of these students, rather than expect these students to adapt to or drop out from schools as they are currently structured. Relatively few students drop out from the elite schools; focusing more effort and resources on these schools will only marginally affect the Dropout Rate.

2. A MAJOR ASSAULT ON THE DROPOUT PROBLEM SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

The overwhelming evidence from this study indicates that Chicago high schools generally do well when they receive well-prepared students, those with reading scores at or above normal levels and at a normal age. When students are poorly prepared, Dropout Rates soar. The schools with the worst Dropout Rates receive prohibitively high proportions of their students who cannot read English at normal rates, and far too many who are already overage. Much of the current effort at Dropout reduction focuses on ameliorative efforts at the high schools, but the data from this study indicate that such attention at the high school level is too late. The Dropout problem is not amenable to quick fix solutions, but will require a number of years to alter. Progress can be measured by increasing reading scores of entering students, and a reduction in the number of overage entrants.

3. DROPOUT REDUCTION EFFORTS SHOULD FOCUS ON BRINGING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS UP TO THE NORMAL RANGE.

The single most important factor which varied correspondingly with the Dropout Rate was the proportion of students entering high school with reading scores at, or above, normal rates. Schools with high proportions of entrants reading at, or above, normal have low Dropout Rates; those with low levels of normal reading entrants have high Dropout Rates. Further, when the reading scores of entering students improved, the Dropout Rate declined. Thus, an effective Dropout prevention strategy must focus on raising the level of preparedness of entering high school students without raising the level of overage entrants.

4. INCREASED USE OF GRADE RETENTION WILL LIKELY BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS A WAY TO REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE.

Overwhelmingly, students entering high school overage drop out. Three-quarters of all students two years overage drop out, and three-fifths of all students one year overage do the same. By retaining eighth grade students and preventing them from entering high school in the Class of 1984, the Dropout Rate for that year was arbitrarily lowered, but the rate for the Class of 1985 can be expected to be correspondingly higher as a higher proportion of entrants would then be overage. Increasing the number of overage students by elementary grade retention is only likely to increase the Dropout Rate. Even overage students reading one whole level higher than their normal age counterparts drop out more frequently, negating any presumed benefit of retention.

5. SPECIAL FOCUS MUST BE GIVEN TO SCHOOLS WHICH DO NOT DO AS WELL AS EXPECTED WITH THE STUDENTS THEY RECEIVE.

It is unrealistic to expect Crane High School, which received 60% of its entering students reading below normal levels and 38% who were overage, to have as high a Graduation Rate as Lane Tech, with none of its students reading below normal rates, and only 3% overage. But 18 other schools received a higher proportion of their students reading below normal and yet had lower Dropout Rates than did Crane. Similar conditions exist at several other schools. These units must receive special attention from District Superintendents, or, if these officials are consumed by their responsibilities for elementary schools (they have 20 to 25 elementary schools and only two or three high schools in their districts), special area high school superintendents might be created to provide this attention. However, since the preparedness of students entering high school is the primary predictor of Dropout Rates, the current arrangement seems to be more logical.

6. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO ADOPT NEW DATA MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING, VERIFYING, AND REPORTING STUDENT OUTCOME INFORMATION SIMILAR TO THOSE EMPLOYED IN THIS STUDY.

This study has established the basic student tracking procedures for longitudinally compiling and reporting Dropout, Graduation, and Transfer Rates for all students in an entering class. This way of reporting the data makes clear what happens to students through their high school career, and helps to pinpoint the places where extra effort is most needed. We recommend the Board adopt procedures similar to those used in this study to report Dropout data in the future. Individual student information should be maintained from entry into the Chicago Public Schools. At entry into high school, an unalterable class code (the projected graduation date for that entering class) should be entered on the student's record. Achievement scores should be included on the student information file. We further strongly recommend the Board adopt for immediate implementation a policy of verifying all transfers out of the system. Before a student is considered to have transferred out of the Chicago system, verification from a certified high school in another school district should be obtained confirming he has actually been enrolled in that school. Students who are no longer enrolled in Chicago schools but for whom no such verification can be obtained should be considered Dropouts. The school district should make this data available to interested members of the public in a manner that protects individual rights of privacy and facilitates analysis. Computerized data tapes are one key format in which basic data should be available for analysis.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Dr. Hess.

Now Mr. Geiger.

Mr. GEIGER. Thank you, Senator Pell, Senator Stafford.

I am Keith Geiger, vice president of the National Education Association, which represents 1.7 million education employees at elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Our members are on the front line of this Nation's efforts to provide quality education to every student in the public schools. We continue to contribute to that effort by emphasizing the need for and importance of equality and excellence in curricula and students'total education experience. We believe enactment of the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985, S. 1525, would broaden the scope of the education reform movement by providing an opportunity for at-risk students to reach their individual levels of excellence.

Equality of opportunity is not an easy goal when large numbers of our students begin their academic careers with the cinder blocks of poverty, low self-esteem, language barriers, and general feelings of hopelessness weighing them down. For these youngsters the classroom can be just one more arena in which to fail. These at-risk youngsters, who according to the National Center for Education Statistics comprise one-quarter of the country's 18-year-olds, deserve our concern and our help. Education reform must be expanded to accommodate their special needs.

Mr. Chairman, we at NEA believe the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act will expand the focus, discussion and activity of the excellence movement to include these at-risk students. In so doing, it will help these youths to reach their full scholastic potential. It will assist those of us in the field of education in our efforts to help youngsters who have dropped out of school to return to academic learning. The legislation is also designed to prepare at-risk students to continue their studies.

Far too often, our society has been willing to close its eyes to the least fortunate among us—to allow them to drift aimlessly into lives of poverty, hopelessness and despair. We believe that all children can become competent, productive citizens and, with our help, can reach their own threshold of excellence. The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985 is an important rung on the ladder to helping at-risk students achieve these goals.

In March of this year, the Education Commission of the States, ECS, convened a business advisory commission to explore new policies to meet the needs of "left-out and left-over students"—potential dropouts. ECS believes that these at-risk students need new programs and services to move them into the Nation's mainstream. The business advisory commission reported to ECS the following dimensions of the dropout problem.

About 700,000 students dropped out of school last year and another 300,000 were chronic truants.

Dropout rates are unconscionably high for minorities and the poor. Students in the bottom third of the socioeconomic ladders have three to four times the dropout rate of those from more affluent families. Black and Hispanic rates of dropout are one and one-half to two times higher than white students.

The incidence of teenage pregnancy and childbirth has increased, regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic status. More than 1 million teens become pregnant each year.

NEA believes it is equally alarming that two-thirds of the students who drop out do so because they have given up on school as a vehicle for their success. They simply do not believe school will work for them because they do not see how it ever has. What they fail to see is that by leaving school they simultaneously set in motion an unfortunate sequence of events that will continually rob them—not only of a high school diploma but also of better jobs, higher wages, and other important benefits and opportunities.

Young people in general have an unemployment rate three times that of the adult rate. ECS estimates that more than 3 million 16- to 24-year-olds are looking for work, and another 191,000 are classified as "discouraged," that is, they have given up.

The unemployment rate among black youth is 40 percent, nearly three times that of whites, which is roughly 15 percent. Twenty-four percent of Hispanic youth are willing to work but cannot find jobs. If we reduce the issue of youth unemployment to its nub, one important fact looms large—these youngsters have no high school diploma. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, last year, 36 percent of high school dropouts were unemployed compared to 21 percent of high school graduates who did not enroll in college. Men and women 25 years old and older who did not complete high school earned about one-third less than those who graduated. And without skills and a job, many dropouts turn to delinquency and crime.

The U.S. Department of Justice found that the majority of inmates in local jails had not earned high school diplomas. Fifty-nine percent of white inmates and 63 percent of black inmates. Estimates are that we spend over $15,000 per year to house each inmate in a correctional institution. This amount exceeds the cost of education for 1 year at either Harvard or Yale. In fact, this country spends about 2½ times as much to keep a person incarcerated as it would to send that person to college.

Mr. Chairman, if we as a nation continue to fail to invest in dropout prevention, we will pay an even greater price in unemployment, welfare assistance, incarceration, and lost taxes and productivity. All these factors have an adverse impact on our economy and the spirit of the Nation as a whole.

The administration's budget for fiscal year 1986 contains no new initiatives to combat the burgeoning rate of school dropouts. Instead, the Education Department has proposed complete elimination of Federal aid for dropouts who want to return to their academic studies at postsecondary education institutions—primarily proprietary schools. By eliminating higher education aid to students without high school diplomas, the Department would cut $162 million in Pell grants in fiscal year 1986. This would adversely impact about 119,000 students. About $1 million would be cut in the Guaranteed Student Loan program in 1986–87, according to the Education Department budget office. These reductions would increase to $20 million in 1990 because of the interest payments that would be eliminated. Some 16,000 GSL recipients would be affected in 1986–87, and about 43,000 in 1987–88.

The Department's actions are based on a General Accounting Office report which found that "students admitted on the ability to demonstrate benefit" or those without high school diplomas or equivalency certificates tend to drop out at a much higher rate than those with diplomas. It further reported that 61 percent of these nonhigh school graduates who were admitted to the programs dropped out, as compared with 47 percent of high school graduates.

The administration has attempted to trade the lives of these at-risk youngsters for short-term budget savings. In focusing on the cost of these programs, it has ignored their value. The result of this dollar and cent logic will be to close the door of opportunity to thousands of young adults who desire to continue their education, condemning them to lives of limited possibility.

NEA believes the administration has missed an important point by not focusing on the positive aspects of at-risk students who want to rekindle their interest in education or on the direct societal benefits of their doing so. We at NEA believe the desire of these students to seek a higher education must be encouraged and supported.

The Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985, S. 1525, H.R. 3042, is designed to address two major needs: the lack of data on the extent of the school dropout problem and the lack of programmatic solutions. The bill would direct the Secretary of Education to conduct a national study of the extent and nature of the problem, develop a standard definition of dropout, and determine factors contributing to the current dropout situation. Demonstration grants would be awarded for programs designed to, one, locate dropouts and develop ways of drawing them back into the school system; two, identify potential dropouts by recognizing "early warning signs"; three, explore the reasons why students leave school and how counseling and remedial help keep them in school; four, offer alternative educational opportunities, including vocational training; and, 5, establish ways of sharing information on how to prevent dropping out. The grants would be authorized at $50 million a year for four years, from fiscal year 1987 through fiscal year 1990. The bill would also require a local match of gradually increasing amounts over the life of the project and an annual report to Congress on the progress of the program. NEA believes enactment of this legislation would move the Nation one giant step forward in providing all students equality of opportunity to achieve their measure of excellence.

The education reform movement is mushrooming throughout the country in ways we in the education field could not have imagined. Local school districts, parents and communities are acknowledging their interdependence and forming creative alliances to promote their mutual goals. The commitment and creativity we see first hand are commendable. We are also seeing renewed congressional commitment to education reform and excellence. Your commitment, Mr. Chairman, to expand the excellence and reform movement to include at risk students is laudable. Other measures have also been introduced that would assist local districts in achieving their goals of educational excellence. One such bill is the School Excellence and Reform Act of 1985, SERA, introduced by Senator

Dodd—Democrat, Connecticut—and Representative Hawkins—Democrat, California—in the House, S. 1666, H.R. 2840.

SERA would incorporate provisions for general aid for educational excellence as well as improved instruction in math, science, communications skills, technology education, foreign language, and in guidance and counseling. The bill also contains targeted aid to meet the needs of historically unserved and underserved students—aid for such programs as dropout prevention, early childhood education, school day care, in-service teacher training, effective schools, and secondary basic skills. SERA demands accountability from State and local education agencies and is results-oriented. Continued Federal funding is assured only when school and student improvement occurs. NEA believes this is important legislation which must be enacted.

Mr. Chairman, NEA believes that we as educators have a special mandate to lead the search for answers to the problem of school dropouts. This burden of responsibility led NEA to act on its commitment to take definitive steps to prevent school dropouts. During our annual convention in July, NEA President Mary Futrell asked the 7,500 delegates to support initiatives that would launch a national campaign to combat the school dropout and illiteracy problem. NEA delegates enthusiastically approved the plan and Operation Rescue is now being implemented. Under the project, NEA will earmark $1.7 million—a dollar for each of its members—for educational excellence projects designed by NEA members in their own communities.

Operation Rescue is being coordinated by the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, NFIE, a charitable, tax-exempt foundation created by NEA in 1969. Beginning with the 1986-87 school year, NEA, through NFIE, will provide up to $700,000 to fund outstanding locally developed dropout prevention projects. The remaining $1 million will be invested to become a permanent funding source for future education initiatives. Through Operation Rescue, NEA hopes to help cut the dropout rate in half by 1990.

Mr. Chairman, NEA believes there are no throw-away students—no expendable young people. The mission of the public schools is to accommodate the needs of all students. We believe further that the education reform movement must be expanded to include all students—not only the gifted and talented or affluent, but those at risk, including the handicapped. We must not allow these students to continue to slip through the cracks of despair and failure by our shortsightedness and insensitivity to their special needs. While education is the centerpiece of national focus, we have the perfect environment in which to rescue these youngsters. Enactment of the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act, as well as the School Excellence and Reform Act, is essential to national efforts to stem the tide of students who drop out of our schools and later the society.

Thank you.

Senator SIMON. We thank all three of you. We have a vote on right now. Senator Pell has gone over to vote and will be back very shortly, and we will probably have to recess as soon as I go over to vote.

Let me, Dr. Hess, mention the importance of the elementary and even preelementary level.

The Devoryk School in Chicago, has a very fine superintendent. They have two groups of kindergarten students, one where they had had a prekindergarten program, where they had required parents to be involved, and a regular kindergarten where they had come to for the first time. The difference between those two groups is just tremendous, and that difference is likely shown in years ahead, including high school years.

Let me ask one question of all three of you. I would not want to reach this point, but if suddenly each of you were to become a member of the U.S. Senate, and you just dream about what you would do, beyond this pending legislation, what should we do as a Nation to really be providing the kind of opportunity we should be providing?

Dr. Hess.

Dr. HESS. Well, I think you put your finger on one part of it. Preschool, early childhood school education seems to be one of the things that does make a difference. However, you have to be able to keep those kids who are working well when they come to kindergarten together. And we found in Chicago that where those kids go into a school with many other students who have not been in that kind of experience, the effect is diluted much more quickly than if those students can stay together.

We should think about doing preschools of all entering students of some selected schools, to see if we can try and keep a whole school moving in the same type of direction, that that one class has been doing. I think we also need to move dramatically in moving to reduce the class size down to 18. I think we should be moving in that direction, at least for the first primary grades.

Those are expensive solutions. The project that was outlined a few minutes ago looks like it is an expensive solution as well.

Senator SIMON. Mr. Ramos.

Mr. RAMOS. If I had that option, what I would do is bring together all of the individuals across the country who represent the advanced thinking in education the progressive thinkers, people such as those representing the central Essential Schools and others, and I would ask them to evaluate education from the bottom up and think about the total restructuring. For example, inasmuch as our society has restructured education around what was an agrarian society, perhaps we ought to think differently about what a school calendar ought to be and scope and sequence. And what I would do is bring together these reformers and have them consider how we might do this in a major encompassing way.

Senator SIMON. If you could restructure school with that authority, what would you do?

Mr. RAMOS. I would develop hundreds of ALP's. I think many of the ideas that we have had the good fortune of examining and researching over the years are very sound. This is only my third year there so I cannot necessarily claim I have been the one that has processed all these things. But I have to say that it is a tremendous process. It is a tremendous way for students to move from dependent to independent learning and to know how to learn, which is most important.

Facts and figures are important, but if the student knows how to learn, it certainly is the key.

Senator SIMON. Mr. Geiger.

Mr. GEIGER. For the third and fourth year in a row, SAT scores have increased. This last year was the greatest increase. Our 17- and 18-year-olds are reading better today than they did in 1971. And there are a lot of people who think that is a big surprise. That ought not to be a surprise to anybody.

The kinds of programs that the Federal Government put in place in this country in the 1960's to help the low-income families, the poor families, the minority students in the inner city schools, I believe are paying dividends.

You mentioned the school in Chicago. The one I am most familiar with is the high school in Ypsilanti, MI, where they tracked the students for the last 19 years. Those who had the preschool program are doing much better than those who had no preschool program. And at the same time, the Federal funding, especially for these kinds of programs, for the last 3 years has decreased as you know, from 9 to 6.2 percent of the Federal budget.

If I had one wish, I would again create the kind of atmosphere in this country in which public education is an issue that the Federal Government has to be concerned about, the State government has to be concerned about. It is a sharing of responsibilities.

Unfortunately, right now in this city, it seems to me that we want to pawn it all off on the State and local. It is a shared responsibility, and if we are going to continue with the kinds of programs that have made reading scores go up in the last 3 or 4 years, it is going to be a sharing, especially in the chapter I programs, the title I programs, the remedial programs. And those are basically Federal programs.

Dr. HESS. In that same light, we talk about the good things that were done, but even with new State moneys that have been put into early childhood education in Illinois, only about 12 percent of the qualified disadvantaged students in Chicago will have access to those preschool programs. So we are talking about 88 percent of the qualified kids who will not have that advantage.

So, even when we talk about those things, we are talking about things that are available to only a few children.

Senator SIMON. Even without humanitarian considerations, just looking at the cold hard dollars, we would be much further ahead helping that percentage; is that correct?

Dr. HESS. Much further. Lifetime social costs equal $2.5 billion for 12,000 dropouts from one class of the Chicago school system. That is $60 million a year. We could not spend nearly that much money for preschool education for all of those children.

Senator SIMON. We are going to have to take a few minutes recess right now. Senator Pell will be back very quickly and the hearing will continue.

[Short recess.]

Senator PELL. The subcommittee will come back into session and we now come to panel 3, Ms. Marion Fye, a student at Cardoza Senior High School, Washington, DC; and Ms. Lieselotte Maher, principal of the Booker T. Washington Alternative School, Terre Haute, IN.

There is going to be another vote in a moment, so I have to rush back. I am trying to complete this panel prior to that.

We will start out with Ms. Maher.

STATEMENTS OF LIESELOTTE MAHER, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BOOKER T. WASHINGTON ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL, TERRE HAUTE, IN; AND MARION FYE, STUDENT AT CARDOZA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. MAHER. Thank you very much.

Good morning. Mr. Chairmen and members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities, my name is Lieselotte Maher, and I am the Assistant Administrator at the Booker T. Washington Alternative School in Terre Haute, IN.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with the committee my views and concerns in regards to dropout prevention, a problem which I feel has tragic results, not only for the individual, but for the Nation as well.

I speak to you today on behalf of the American Association for Counseling and Development. AACD is a professional organization of more than 46,000 counselors who work in the areas of education, mental health, rehabilitation, and human development services. I might also add that the American School Counselor Association, a division of AACD, is the largest organized body of its type in the world.

Let me briefly tell you about the Booker T. Washington Alternative School, and explain to you the impact I believe it has had on the lives of its students.

Over a decade ago, our school had its beginning as a one-room operation at the local YMCA. Our mission in those days was focused on coursework for those students who were either pregnant or had already become parents. The program was an outreach project of a local community-based organization.

As word spread about the project, we expanded to two rooms, and 6 years ago we became affiliated with the Vigo County School Corp., and became an official branch of South Vigo High School in Terre Haute, where we now occupy an entire building.

I am happy to tell you that last year we graduated 34 students, and this year we have 146 enrolled in our program, with approximately 46 potential graduates. Let me explain something about our students.

Approximately 58 percent are pregnant or are parents. They range in age from 13 to 45 years old. The remaining 42 percent are what we call alternative students; that is, those that have either dropped out, have an adjustment problem, or are what I term throw-away children—students whose parents have kicked them out of the house and no longer feel any responsibility for their care.

Our work is a challenge. We have a very special clientele. We make no judgments about their personal lives when they come to our school. Rather, we reach out and attempt to help them reach their maximum human potential so that they will lead healthy productive lives.

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As one of our teachers has said, if we were to wrap each of our students up as a package, we would have to mark them "fragile." I believe that our counselors, faculty, and volunteers from the local university and the community help to make the school more than a job; it truly is a labor of love.

Our counseling component is an integral part of the continued functioning of our school. Dropout prevention and dropout reentry programs must meet the needs of its target population in a different manner than that found in traditional school settings. The counseling dimension in dropout prevention and reentry programs takes on a much greater emphasis. It is the counselors who oftentimes find themselves at the frontline of crises situations.

While the counselor is trained to react to these crises situations, our staff prides itself on knowing what steps to take in preventing such crises from reaching those critical points where we risk losing a student.

Counseling in our school is similar to what dropout prevention programs are to traditional education. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I tell you quite honestly that when our counselors and faculty reach out to a student, we are reaching down past the safety net and holding these students, sometimes as young as 13, from sliding down into an irreversible level of poverty and despair.

I am pleased to tell you that our school was recently approved for a contract which will allow us to utilize the services of our local community mental health center. The mental health counselors from the center will provide consultation and supervision to our school which will include the implementation of a peer leadership program.

For our students who have children, but wish to pursue their graduation requirements, we operate a nursery on the premises, which utilizes a number of volunteers and is funded in part through the United Way.

I am proud of what our school can offer, and I believe that the Booker T. Washington Alternative School is a model program. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, there are not nearly enough Booker T. Washington Alternative Schools in this country. We are losing too many students each year who could become active, participating taxpaying citizens of our country. The counseling which these special-needs students must have is seriously lacking.

Legislation such as that proposed in S. 1525 will help to meet the need for such services. Passage of this bill by the Congress will show both compassion and fiscal responsibility. By this, I mean that the costs of enacting legislation such as S. 1525 are far less than the money spent on the welfare parent who lacks a high school diploma, and whose child does not fully develop this mental facilities because of malnourishment.

All of you, along with all of us in the field, can make a difference. I strongly urge the passage of S. 1525 as well as any legislation which supports dropout prevention and dropout reentry programs.

Also, if you are interested in seeing a program in operation, I personally invite all of you to visit us at the Booker T. Washington

Alternative School. If any of you would like additional information on the important role which counselors play in our Nation's schools, I hope that you will contact the American Association for Counseling and Development.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I do appreciate the time you have given me to present my concerns this morning, and I am prepared to answer any questions which you may have.

I very much appreciate being able to speak in front of you. Thank you very much.

Senator PELL. Thank you very much, Ms. Maher.

Now Ms. Fye.

Ms. FYE. Good afternoon, Senator Pell and members of the subcommittee.

I am Marion Fye, a senior at Cardozo High School, a District of Columbia public high school. After graduation, I am looking forward to attending a local college the next fall. It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to come before you to testify on behalf of the District of Columbia public schools on the subject of dropout prevention.

I was among a group of DC public school students who met last week to discuss several topics related to dropout prevention. We talked about problems that interfered with our efforts at obtaining an education; people and programs which helped us remain in or return to school, and reasons why we are glad that we are continuing our educations.

During the course of our conversation, it became clear that many things had come between us and our efforts at obtaining a high school education. Some of these obstacles were peer pressure to drop out of school, drug use among family and peers, unsympathetic teachers and school staff, family problems, economic need, poor self-image, and teenage parenthood.

We had also talked about a long list of individuals and programs which had helped in various ways to keep us in school or to convince us to complete our high school education. At the top of the list of these supportive services were many caring and dedicated individuals—teachers, counselors, educational aides, attendance staff, and even school board members—willing to go out of their way to help students stay in or return to school. We talked about teachers who are as concerned with students as with subject matter, attendance counselors and aides eager to help students with their personal as well as academic problems, and a school board member willing to take time out from the many duties of his elected office to counsel a student eager to return to school.

In our conversation, we also discussed several programs planned by the school system and staffed with many of the caring people I have just described. They were responsible for convincing us to continue our education and return to school. Three of us had been influenced greatly by staff members at the student attendance service center, a DC public schools facility which provides attendance counseling by social workers, counselors, and others to help students with severe attendance problems.

Some teenage mothers have been able to return to school shortly after having babies, thanks to the day care centers located in several District of Columbia high schools. These centers accept babies as

young as 6 weeks and provide child care training for the teenage parent who is also enrolled in school. Others of us had decided to continue or return to school because of career and alternative education programs offered by the DC public schools.

One student involved in the discussion is now studying printing at the Penn Career Development Center in the morning and attending regular high school classes at Dunbar High School each afternoon; another goes to Ellington School of the Arts where he studies vocal and instrumental music, and a third looks forward to enrolling soon in the School Without Walls, which will enable him to receive an education in a variety of settings located throughout the city.

We all agreed that we are glad that we are in school for one reason: We hope to make something out of ourselves and realize that we must have an education in order to do so. We have many goals that we want to accomplish— like medicine, business, a musical career—and we all share a desire to get the high school education necessary if we are to reach these goals. In other words, we realize that an education is the first step toward our dreams and are happy to be in high school, taking that first step.

Last, there are other young people who are having some of the same problems that we had but have not been as fortunate as we are because they have not returned to school. There are not enough resources to help them. Many different kinds of services are needed to help them with their many different problems. As one of our students indicated, there are others who need the people and services that have helped us return to school.

Thank you again for this opportunity to address the subcommittee I would be glad to respond to any questions that you might have.

Senator PELL. Thank you.

I understand that a number of fellow students are here with you today. I thank them for their contribution they made to your testimony.

I would like to ask you one question. You mentioned the School Without Walls. Would you describe that to me a little bit?

Ms. FYE. Well, I would have to provide that to you later.

Senator PELL. How would you change your own experience in school in a way that would encourage other students to stay?

Ms. FYE. Well, I never dropped out of high school, but I became pregnant when I was in the eleventh grade, and we have a day care center that is very good with babies who are 6 weeks old, and encouraged me to come back to school and continue my education. If other students knew that there were day care centers in school that would help them continue in school, it would help them continue their education and you would have less dropouts.

Senator PELL. Ms. Maher, what is the ratio of teachers to students in your school?

Ms. MAHER. The classes are small, and we have 10 part-time staff members. So some classes only have 10 students. Others have a maximum of 24; so individual instruction is very important

Senator PELL. What do you consider the main cause of dropouts? Is there any single main cause?

Ms. MAHER. In our school it is adolescent pregnancy, and the other one is where you turn 16 you just drop out, and as one of the other gentlemen states, 2 years later you realize you need to go back to school, and our returnees are usually 18.

Senator PELL. What do you think would be the main reason more than others as to why youngsters drop out of high school?

Ms. FYE. It is teenage pregnancy.

Senator PELL. That would be for the women. What about among the men?

Ms. FYE. Drug use among peers.

Senator PELL. What would be your answer, Ms. Maher?

Ms. MAHER. I would say for young men it is on the lower range of achievement, because if you read at a second or third grade level, remediation programs are very necessary in alternative schools.

Senator PELL. Thank you both very much indeed for being here, and this concludes the testimony.

I would like to add that the record will remain open for at least 2 weeks so we might receive any additional written testimony, and follow up on Ms. Fye's answer to my question, the description of the School Without Walls.

I would be very interested in that, if you would submit that in writing to us.

[Additional material supplied for the record follows:]

Prepared Testimony

for the

Subcommittee on Education, Arts & The Humanities

United States Senate

Washington, D.C.

on

October 17, 1985

by
Robin Trimble White
State Supervisor, Home Economics Education
West Virginia Department of Education
Bureau of Vocational, Technical & Adult Education
Charleston, West Virginia

The Honorable Senator Robert T. Stafford, Chairman
Subcommittee on Education, Arts & The Humanities

Washington, D.C.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Robin White, State Supervisor of Home Economics Education for the West Virginia Department of Education.

It is a pleasure for me to present testimony before the distinguished members of the subcommittee and to have this opportunity to share my views and concerns as a home economist about teenage pregnancy and its effect on school dropout and reentry.

The members of the American Home Economics Association share your distress over the magnitude of the school dropout problem in this country. We join you in seeking to find solutions to the vast and complex problem. As experts in the field of family issues, home economists believe that a major component of the drop out problem is the tragedy of adolescent parenthood; that teen pregnancy and parenthood often are a primary reason for leaving school prematurely.

Indeed, teen parenthood <u>is</u> a tragedy. Even if the young mother-to-be crosses the hurdle of a safe, uncomplicated pregnancy and delivers a healthy child, she has not escaped the crisis. The social and economic realities of teen parenthood are likely to remain with her for a lifetime. If she marries, she is three times as likely to become divorced or separated as those who delayed childbearing beyond their teens.

Moreover, parenthood is the most common reason for teenage girls to drop out of school and only half will ever return to complete their education. As a result, they are likely to have

low-status, low paying jobs or to be unemployed. Lack of competitive job skills, due to an interrupted or uncompleted education, keeps these young mothers at nearly half the median income ($7,550) earned by families without a teen pregnancy. Two thirds live below the $6,682 poverty level.

Young mothers who do not live with the child's father are less likely to receive child support payments. Consequently, nearly one quarter of all teen mothers receive federal support through the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Nearly half of the $9.4 billion invested in AFDC went to families in which the women had given birth as a teenager. This $4.7 billion does not include other welfare program expenditures, such as Medicaid, food stamps, and health care costs associated with low-birth weight infants.

The adolescent whose family remains a support network throughout the pregnancy is relatively fortunate. If she lives with her parents, she is more likely to remain in school and complete her education, hold a decent job, and avoid dependence on welfare.

While her relationships with her boyfriend and family may change, possibly the hardest adjustment the teenage mother faces is the effect of her pregnancy on her relationships with schoolmates.

As Liz, one 17 year old parent, related "It's tough seeing all your other friends doing the things you once did - but can't anymore...sometimes I can't help it, but I get jealous of my girlfriends. All they have to worry about is what to wear to school the next day..."

Judy, a sophomore parent, related her experience this way, "When I began to 'show,' I wasn't asked to parties anymore. One of the girls told me her mother thought it 'wasn't appropriate'. When I heard my friends talking about who was going with whom and what clothes they bought and what the latest records were, I somehow thought all that was silly and unimportant. A real tragedy had gone on in my life and I felt set apart, old before my time..."

The realization of the enormous responsibilities associated with being a parent is often overwhelming. Teen parents often feel a sense of loneliness, depression, isolation, and helplessness. Their financial situation makes it virtually impossible to live the life they experienced just a short time ago as dependent children themselves.

Sheila, 16, a high school dropout from Oklahoma, honestly admits, " ...I knew exactly what I was doing. I wanted to have this baby! ...All my life I wanted something, someone that was all my own, that needed me totally...I didn't think about who would pay the bills, who would stay with her 24 hours a day, who would give her everything she needed, physically and mentally. I learned a lot about people and life, but I learned a little too late."

Too often the child of the teenage pregnancy also becomes a victim. Children living in these teen-parent families are adversely affected. They are often the victims of inconsistent care and of child abuse. They are likely to have lower achievement scores, repeat school grades, and become teenage parents and/or school dropouts themselves.

As home economists, we see these glaring statistics as a reminder that the teen pregnancy problem of the 70's has not gone away. It affects the young teenage girl; her boyfriend, his family, her family, the school and society as a whole.

The controversy over the kind of approach our government should take over this issue often centers around the goal of the program -- that is, whether it is to discourage teen sexual activity and prevent teen pregnancies or to deal with the problem of the teenager once she becomes a parent. The debate probably will not soon be over on this issue. But, even if the government takes no role in preventing births to teens, it may still have a role in helping teen parents once the child is born.

In the State of Connecticut, Weaver High School is one of the few in the United States that makes it possible for mothers and babies to attend school together. This program attempts to keep the pregnant teen in school to help eliminate the adverse economic effects of dropping out of school. This project was made possible by a Consumer and Homemaking Education grant and reversed the dropout rate from 80% to 20%.

This parent-child education center exemplifies the total program approach characteristic of home economics programs. It provides the services teen mothers need:

- convenient, quality child care
- a sense of responsibility for her child
- parenting skills needed for the nurturing of the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children.
- referral services for health care
- time in school to develop job training skills, and
- opportunity to complete academic requirements for graduation.

When asked to describe the kind of girl who is likely to bear a child as a teen, the Guttmacher Institute found the most common answer to be - "adolescents who have been deprived, emotionally as well as economically, and who, unrealistically, seek gratification and fulfillment in a child of their own." This is important to note because it emphasizes another type of education that is often needed -- one which fosters the development of a good self concept and strong decision making skills. While we cannot make the decision to become or not to become sexually active for teens, educators can provide them with skills for developing the self-confidence to be able to say "No" and not be heavily influenced by negative peer pressure.

In West Virginia, two comprehensive home economics courses strive to motivate students to "take charge of their lives" and to be responsible for the consequences of their behavior. Adult

Roles and Functions is taught in over 95% of West Virginia high schools and is required in many counties for graduation.

Because parents, health officials, and school administrators saw a need for a similar course for younger teens, a program called Surviving Today's Experiences and Problems Successfully ("STEPS") was developed. It too is receiving great reviews across the state.

In Tennessee, two parenting programs were submitted for national review as exemplary projects in a search for excellence in parenthood/child development education. In Memphis, a parenthood specialist is available through vocational home economics funding as a resource to classroom teachers. In Nashville, four broad concepts are explored in a parenting course -- decision to parent, preparation for birth, parental adjustments, and guidance for the developing child.

In Arlington, Virginia, fewer repeat pregnancies, better attendance, and more potential dropouts achieving graduation have been noticeable results of the home economics Teenage Parenting Curriculum implemented there. Included in the program are goals to prepare youth to become competent parents by helping them to:

- gain self-understanding and achieving self-confidence
- explore career options to assure self sufficiency and freedom from welfare, and
- determine future life directions

Success stories are plentiful, but only a small majority of American teenagers currently are being served by these "pre-parenting" programs. To make existing programs more effective and

to implement new programs, public awareness of the problem and its solutions must be increased. Financial assistance must be provided to continue the project, at a cost of up to $40,000 annually.

But it is important to note that major components already are in place. There is a grassroots network of over 550,000 ir ividual Future Homemakers of America (FHA) members that have been critical to the success of the peer education project. State FHA teams have been educated by medical professionals on the health concerns associated with teen pregnancy, by special works on the social and economic consequences of an unplanned pregnancy, by media specialists on effective speaking techniques, and by individual state and community agencies on networking strategies. These teams have developed their plan of action for disseminating information to local FHA Chapters and defined various projects, in which chapters and individuals could become involved. A "ripple effect" has occurred across the country as "Healthy Babies" became the project emphasis for several years. The National Office of FHA attributes the success of the project to the careful selection of "test" sites to be used as exemplary chapter projects.

The commitment that local FHA students and home economics teachers have made to parenting education has determined its local and national success. It has been a powerful example of positive teen pressure. In a small rural county in West Virginia, one university doctor credited this project with the dramatic decrease in teen pregnancies in the area he served. Local chapters were involved with local health departments, PTA groups, 4-H Extension

Clubs, Civic organizations, boards of education, and others. The local network of services available to teens was strengthened and the moral support of knowing that friends, neighbors and relatives were concerned about the problem remained, even if funding eventually ran out.

Realistically, it's unlikely there will ever be enough dollars to fund the social programs members of our society need, so it's important that we make the best use of those funds available. I think cooperative projects are a reasonable solution to many of our societal ills.

I know home economics will continue to work toward the reduction of school dropouts. Home economists will work toward assisting teen parents in completing their education and improving the quality of individual and family life.

I invite you to look to home economics for assistance in implementing innovative parenthood education programs and from that, lowering the drop-out rate of teenage mothers. We are making a valuable contribution to young people today through the development of positive self concepts, positive human relationships, and positive attitudes towards work. A productive, contributing member of society has these traits and home economics is preparing students for the dual roles of homemaker and wage-earner. We have much of the curriculum necessary to do the job and we have the trained professionals to deliver the content to many of the 27.6 million teens who are waiting to be served.

Thank you for your interest in meeting their needs and for this opportunity to share our concerns.

TESTIMONY

OF

CHARLES DAVIS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
EDUCATIONAL CLINICS, INC.
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ARTS, AND HUMANITIES
OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

ON THE

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RE-ENTRY ACT OF 1985

OCTOBER 17, 1985

I applaud the interest expressed by the members of this subcommittee and the sponsors of S. 1525 in exploring new approaches to the problem of high school dropouts.

The number of students leaving school before graduation has been growing at an alarming rate in the last few years. At least 25 percent of the young people in our country who begin the ninth grade do not graduate from high school; in some urban areas, the proportion of dropouts reaches 50 percent or more.

Dropouts inflict a very high cost on our society. In Washington state, they constitute about 50 percent of A.F.D.C. recipients and 70 percent of our prison inmates. They pay less taxes and are more likely to require remedial training when they are employed. Perhaps the greatest loss to our society, however, is the waste of human talent and energy when young people stop believing in themselves.

In Washington state, we have developed what we believe is an exciting, cost-effective, and very successful approach to the dropout problem. In 1974, Educational Clinics, Inc. (ECI) opened its first "educational clinic" for dropout youth in Everett, Washington. In 1977, the Washington state legislature, using ECI's clinic concept as a model, enacted landmark legislation which authorized the use of state funding to pay tuition fees for eligible students at private educational clinics. Governor Deukmejian of California

recently signed into law an educational clinics bill based on the Washington statute.

Educational clinics are special-purpose private schools which offer instruction in basic academic skills and employment orientation, along with counseling to motivate their students and help them solve personal problems. The program is called a clinic because it follows an individualized procedure analogous to that of a medical clinic: diagnosis, prescription, treatment and evalulation. The clinic is a performance-based system of education where the length of stay varies with each individual, depending on the student's ability and rate of progress.

We have conducted intensive follow-up studies on our graduates over the years. We have learned that more than two-thirds of our former students were still engaged in constructive activities (employment, education, training, or military service) 2 1/2 years after leaving the clinic program. The results after five years were even more positive. An outside study conducted in 1982 determined that for every dollar the state government expended for ECI services to a student, there was a $1.10 return to the government each year in social program cost savings and tax contributions.

In light of our experience, I must confess that we are disappointed with the direction S. 1525 takes in addressing the dropout problem. It places almost exclusive reliance on

the public school system to solve the problem of dropouts from that system.

There is no question that our public schools can do more to develop specialized programs for dropouts and potential dropouts. The fact remains, however, that the very system which students reject by dropping out---or which rejects them by driving them out---is unlikely to provide all of these dropout youth with the services they need to make them productive citizens.

A public school system cannot be all things to all young people, certainly not at a cost we can reasonably afford. We need to employ additional institutions outside the public school system to adequately address the dropout problem. We need a system of institutions which specialize in addressing the full range of needs and problems of young people who have not been able to function in a public school environment.

I acknowledge that Section 1006(6) of S. 1525 permits public schools "to use the resources of the community, including contracting with public or private entities or community-based organizations, to provide services to the grant recipient or the target population." It has been our experience, however, that public school systems do not like to contract with other agencies to conduct classroom instruction. I would anticipate that grant recipients would utilize this section only to obtain ancillary services,

supplementary to classroom instruction, from outside institutions.

I urge this subcommittee to revise this legislation to enable private institutions, outside the public school system, to become recipients of these grants. I also urge you to hold field hearings on the West Coast so you can learn more about educational clinics and the work we are already doing with dropouts.

We don't have all the answers to the dropout problem, but we do have some of them. I think it would be a great tragedy if Congress looks solely to the public schools to resolve the dropout problem, while private dropout clinics that work close down for lack of funding.

I appreciate this opportunity to share my views with you.

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

BY

Douglas G. Glasgow, Ph.D.
Vice President for Washington Operations
National Urban League, Inc.

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
ARTS AND HUMANITIES

ON THE

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND REENTRY ACT OF 1985

October 17, 1985

The National Urban League was founded in 1910 as a non-profit community service organization committed to securing full and equal opportunities for Black people,other minority groups and the poor. There are currently 113 Urban League affiliates located in 34 states and the District of Columbia.

Education continues to be one of the top priorities of the National Urban League. Within the Black community and among the economically disadvantaged,education is viewed as one of the most important means of obtaining a better quality of life for their children. The high rate of school dropout presents a threat to this goal. Consequently, the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985 is of vital importance.

A recent report by the College Board stated that the overall dropout rate for both Blacks and whites 14 to 34 years old declined between 1971 and 1981. The dropout rate was reduced from 15 to 12 percent for whites and from 26 to 18 percent for Blacks. However, when one looks at subgroups within these populations it becomes apparent that there is still a significant problem. During this same time period the dropout rate for 14 and 15 year olds actually increased. For whites the rate increased from 1.3 to 1.8 percent while the rate for Blacks nearly doubled, increasing from 1.6 to 2.9 percent.

The development of effective methods for turning around this increase in school dropout for 14 and 15 year olds, further reducing the overall rate and encouraging the reentry of those who have left the school system requires a good understanding of the factors that influence a student's decision to dropout. Two such factors are the type of experience that a student has with the school system and the student's view of the relationship between getting a high school education and achieving success in later life.

From 1983-1984 a Board of Inquiry appointed by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students made a study of the public school system and paid particular attention to students who have not been adequately served by it. In the Board's report (Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk) they state that,

> *The rising number of school dropouts is the single most dramatic indicator of the degree to which schools are failing children.*

Some of the specific characteristics of public schools which the report has cited as barriers to student development and potential contributors to school dropout include: overcrowded classes and insufficient individualized attention for students; abuses of tracking and ability grouping; misuses of testing; narrow curricula and teaching practices which discourage active participation in learning on the part of students; vocational education programs which fail to reinforce regular academic courses or problem-solving, reasoning or analytic skills; a lack of support services such as counseling for students and a lack of support for parent involvement in decision making.

In addition to these barriers faced by all students, the report cited an additional barrier for minority and economically disadvantaged children - continued discrimination practices. The report states,

> *We found over and over again in our inquiry that subtle forms of discrimination still exist in schools. We learned about the daily practices and institutional mechanisms that undermine students' self-esteem and work to push students out of school altogether.*

One of the most destructive aspects of school faced by poor and minority students is low-expectation by teachers. According to the report,

> *Research has documented the special potency of class background, as well as race, in determining teachers' perceptions of and behaviors toward children. According to these studies teachers often adjust educational goals, teach different material, and reward or punish behavior differently by class as well as race.*

Black students are three times more likely to be suspended from school than white students. This inability to attend classes makes it difficult for these students to keep up with their coursework and increases the potential for dropout. Black students are also three times more likely to be misclassified and placed in special education classes. Consequently, thirty years after Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) many Black students are being resegregated within the schools and effectively excluded from the regular classroom.

In May of 1984, the National Urban League issued a paper commemorating the anniversary of the Brown decision. This paper also addresses many of the existing problems in school systems and states,

> *The National Urban League offers an expanded definition of "equity" which includes the concept of parity of educational results. Equity in the 1980's is redefined and holds that in addition to access, the educational system must provide a learning environment in which Black and poor students are able to demonstrate results which are commensurate with those of white students. Equity of educational programs can be measured by outcomes, such as reduction of drop-out and push-out rates, improved attendance, improved retention rates of minorities in the four-year higher education programs, proportionate representation in programs for the gifted, reduction in the disproportionate representation of minority males in disciplinary actions, (such as suspensions and expulsions) and standardized test scores which more nearly approximate those of similar white populations.*

In addition to these characteristics of the school system, a student's view of how important a high school education is to his future achievements also plays an important role in his decision

to dropout. If a student sees a strong reltionship between having a high school diploma and obtaining a job or getting a college education then the student will have a greater incentive to remain in school. However, this incentive is weakened by the reality of high unemployment rates for youth, especially Black youth.

In September 1985 the unemployment rate for youth was 17.8 percent. The rate for Black youth was an astounding 38.3 percent while the rate for white youth was 15.1. Furthermore, data by the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the chances of a Black high school graduates being unemployed are greater than those of a white high school dropouts. In 1982 the unemployment rate for Black high school graduates was 33.5 percent however the rate for white high school dropouts was 27.8 percent. Such inequities in the labor market undermine the committment of Black students to obtaining a high school education.

Students' initiative to remain in school so that they will be able to go on to college can also be weakened by many of the barriers previously mentioned. Students who face low expectation and are improperly tracked or placed in special education classes are likely to be much less prepared for college entry even if they do finish high school. A lack of appropriate guidance by school counselors also reduces the chances that students will be prepared to attend college upon completing high school. If a student desires to go on to college but can see that a high school education will not prepare him to do so then there will be little hope of keeping that student in school.

Such problems are not insurmountable and the National Urban League has had a long and successful history of working with students who are at risk of dropping out of school. Most recently the Urban League initiated a program for at risk students that is intended to provide the skills needed to make a successful transition from school to work, a post-secondary

institution or a combination of the two.

Through this program, academies for at risk students were established within existing high schools. The academies consist of classes structured for students who have the potential to do well in school but show signs of dropping out. These students are identified and brought together to be taught as a group within the school. The curriculum is designed to provide students with strong academic skills as well as relevant career education and work experience in growth industries.

This school within a school approach brings together the strengths of the Urban League, the school system and the business community for the benefit of the students. Through the academies the students receive:

- Instruction in academic courses needed to successfully complete high school and go on to college if desired;
- Training in a field of employment that promises to be a growth industry;
- Field trips to designated businesses in the community;
- Mentors from the business community who establish and maintain a one-on-one relationship with students, act as a resources and provide guidance;
- Instructors and guest speakers from the business community for career education related courses; and
- Summer work experience with businesses involved in the academies.

This program was implemented in 1984 by the Pittsburgh, PA; Portland, OR; and Houston, TX Urban League affiliates. Each affiliate established an academy in one of their city's public schools. In Houston the Microprocessor Training Academy was developed. Pittsburg established the Business and Finance Academy and Portland, the Financial Services Technology Academy.

Through this program the Urban League affiliates are directly addressing many of the problems faced by students within their schools. In addition, the Urban League is strengthening the linkage between a high school education, post secondary education and employment. The curriculum and teacher practices have been made relevant to current career opportunities. Students are taught using a variety of instructional methods which allow them to become actively involved in the learning process. Through mentors, field trips and summer employment students establish ties with the work world before leaving high school. In addition to the advice provided by school counselors and mentors, students can seek assistance from Urban League educational counselors who spend one day a week at the schools as part of the academy program. Parental involvement in the program is encouraged by the Urban League through efforts such as the development of Parents' groups. And finally, support services provided by the Urban League, such as employment, housing and higher education counseling are made available to the entire family.

The academy program has been made possible through private funding and is operating on a small scale. It has been designed to be self sufficient within three years. The Dropout Prevention and Re-entry Act of 1985 would make possible the study of such model programs and the replication of them in many parts of the country faced with the problem of school dropout.

We are pleased that such legislation has been proposed and feel that it is long overdue. We commend the subcommittee for its development of a bill that is designed to address many of the factors contributing to dropout that were previously cited. We do have some concerns with the bill and wish to offer the following recommendations.

The current proposals provides for matching grants but does not specify whether the local match must be cash or whether it can be in-kind.

Since higher dropout rates are associated with low income students, it is conceivable that the areas which have the greatest need for dropout prevention and reentry may be the least able to come up with a cash match. Therefore we recommend that in-kind contributions (e.g., staff time and administrative resources) be specifically included in the bill as an option for fulfilling the matching requirements. Such an arrangement would allow local areas to share responsibility for maintaining the programs without excluding low income areas from participation.

The proposed legislation uses population size as a primary criterion in the grant allocation methodology. This methodology does not take into consideration the percentage of low income students in a particular area. Since low income students have a higher probability of dropping out, this is an important factor that should be included in grant determination.

Finally, the bill does not ensure that community based organizations will be able to participate in the activities to prevent dropout and encourage reentry. Currently the bill provides for grants to local education agencies only. Although these agencies have the option of contracting with community based organizations, they are not obligated to do so. We feel that it is essential for community based organizations to be included in efforts to reduce school dropout. Many of these organizations have long been involved with the provision of services to students who would have otherwise left or remained out of school. Furthermore these organizations are often in the best position to enlist the involvement of the various sectors of a community that may be needed to develop an effective program.

The Urban League will continue to develop programs that address the educational needs of communities. However, we believe there is also a role that must be played by the federal government when a problem is as pervasive as school dropout. We welcome the Dropout Prevention and Reentry Act of 1985 and urge its speedy passage.

TESTIMONY OF
THE NAVAJO NATION BEFORE THE
SENATE LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
NOVEMBER 13, 1985

Mr. Chairman, the Navajo Nation expresses its gratitude for the opportunity to provide this written testimony on our concerns regarding the drop-out problem. Each year a certain number of Navajo school students discontinue their formal education and drop out of school. The dropout problem is one of great concern at the local level. The problem is not the same everywhere within the Navajo Reservation. Dropout rates very considerably from one community to another; indeed, they differ even between high schools in the same school system. While national statistics reveal highest dropout rates for American Indian students (23% for 14-17 year olds), studies by the New Mexico State Department of Education consistently indicate that the Indian students experience the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group.

THE NAVAJO DROP-OUT - A COMPLEX ENIGMA

1980 U.S. census data show that at least 4,000 (29.4%) Navajo students between the ages of 16 and 19 are not in school anywhere. It can be reliably estimated that there are presently over 1,000 Navajos of high school age not currently attending any school. Analysis of available data from various parts of the Navajo Reservation produces a much higher estimate of the dropout rate of up to 48% of the school age population. And it is known that a large number of students drop out long before high school, many as early as the second and third grade or are truants half a school year or more.

While the reasons for dropping out are probably common to virtually all dropout populations, a number of relatively unique factors strongly influence the Navajo dropout rate. Overlapping school systems, road conditions, second language problems, and circumstances unique to many boarding school students figure prominently among them. Because of the nature of the BIA and contract schools' attendance areas, some students are inevitably "lost between the cracks."

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

1. Lack of Statistical Data

Even though Navajo educators are aware of and concerned with the growing problem of Navajo student dropouts, there is a serious handicap involving the handling of this problem. Currently, there are insufficient statistics on the Navajo student dropouts and the reasons for the dropouts as well as nonavailability of financial resources and/or programs and services for early identification, retention and prevention of dropouts. There is a general lack of data regarding Navajo dropouts due in large part to the 1978 BIA Navajo Area decision to stop keeping the "school enrollment census" which tracked virtually

every school-age Navajo child on an annual basis. It showed how many were enrolled in school, the school in which each was enrolled, regardless whether it was BIA or other, and how many were not enrolled. More recently, the Bureau has decided for funding purposes, to keep centralized records of "average daily membership" only, and not of average daily attendance.

2. Avoidance of the Magnitude of the Problem

Another reason for the lack of data is that schools and school systems are often reluctant to look too deeply into their dropout problem. They tend to minimize its seriousness in order to avoid embarrassment and the need to spend scarce funds on what they may consider a fruitless endeavor. In brief, accurate and detailed data is for most practical purposes unavailable about Navajo dropouts on a reservation-wide level. While detailed information is rather scarce, there are some statistics available on the subject, gathered from a variety of sources, which will give an overview of the extent of the problem.*

TRIBAL EFFORTS TO EFFECT PROBLEM

The lack of data on Navajo student dropouts stands directly in the way of efforts to serve their needs. Until a comprehensive study is undertaken, it is impossible to say who drops out, when, from which types of schools, and for what reasons. An accurate picture of the dropout situation is a prerequisite to devising solutions to the dropout problem. Therefore, the Navajo Tribe through its Division of Education has obtained federal funds to conduct a one-year comprehensive study on "The Navajo Area Student Dropout Problem." The major goal of this study is to develop an accurate picture of the dropout situation of the Navajo students on the Navajo Reservation, develop a functional system for tracking students, and make recommendations regarding solutions to the dropout problem.

The purpose of this study is to gather information on : 1) the extent and nature of the dropout problem, 2) identifying the number of students dropping out of schools (BIA, public, private, and contract schools on or near the Navajo Reservation with a significant Navajo student enrollment); 3) determine the reason(s) for the dropouts; 4) develop a system for tracking the dropouts and children not enrolled in any school or educational program; and 5) make recommendations for preventive

* Statistical estimates derived from: 1) analysis and extrapolation of Bureau of Indian Affairs Career Development reports and public schools' data; 2) 1980 U.S. Census; 3) Studies done by New Mexico State Department of Education; 4) Data from two Navajo-controlled alternative schools (Shiprock Alternative and former Cononcito Alternative) and one tribal organization seeking to contract for the operation of an alternative school and one public alternative school program (Window Rock High School) within the Navajo Nation; 5) Data gathered through a Title IV-funded "High School Follow-up" Project; and 6) Personal knowledge of educators with long experience in Navajo education.

programs and/or services. The long-range goal of this study is to develop a feasible, comprehensive system for dropout prevention and the retention of potential dropouts by facilitating the potential dropouts and/or dropouts to successfully complete a high school education.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Navajo students drop out of school for the same reasons as other students as well as for unique reasons of their own. Until a comprehensive study has been funded and completed, it is impossible to say exactly who drops out where and for what reasons. Consequently, it is impossible to say precisely how many or what types of educational programs and alternative schools are needed and where they should be located.

Based on what is already known, however, it can be safely assumed that the development of early identification and prevention programs and the development of student-parent programs in existing schools would be of significant and immediate help. Likewise, it is safe to assume that the establishment of relatively small alternative school programs for both "hard-core" dropouts and student-parents would also do much to begin to alleviate the dropout problem. Development of functional networks among the various juvenile authorities and service providers would likewise be certain to be effective in addressing the needs of Navajo dropouts.

Finally, it can be virtually guaranteed that no truly comprehensive effort to substantially reduce the number of Navajo school dropouts can ever be effective without open communication and genuine cooperation between all entities concerned.

Mr. Chairman, we thank you and members of the Committee for this opportunity to present our views on the dropout problem.

November 18, 1985

Senator Bradley
Hart Senate Office Building
Room 731
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bradley:

As per my conversation with Ms. Gill Korban on November 7, 1985, and at her suggestion, I am sending you the enclosed information on school dropouts. This information was obtained while doing a year's research into the subject of school dropouts.

During the summer, I wrote to you and the other senators sponsoring S1525 expressing my frustrations concerning Section 1008 and particularly operative clauses one through six and nine. After attending the hearing in Washington on October 17, 1985, I was even more frustrated. It is believed that $500,000 will be spent duplicating studies that have already been conducted. At the time of the hearing, the panel members quoted statistic after statistic in their testimonies. Senator Bradley, those statistics were obtained from previous studies. Comprehensive research was conducted in this country from 1940 to 1980. Another study is not needed.

While most experts in the field agree as to who is the dropout, we are no further from developing programs to help keep students in school than we were ten years ago. In many cases, researchers, educators, and parents have all looked upon the school system for the answers; particularly, since they believe that the schools are to blame for the school dropout. But it is the home environment which plays the major roll in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to the child dropping out of school. Never before in American history has such vast sums been poured into educational research, school construction, teacher salaries and every other aspect of educational improvement. Yet, in contrast to all this stands the fact that so many of our school students are walking out of school without a diploma.

Senator Bradley, let us concentrate on helping the parents. This is a more promising place to spend the money. I ask you and the committee to consider a modification of Section 1008. S1525 is a beginning by the federal government to lend a helping hand to our schools. Let us not waste one dollar of taxpayers' money by conducting a study which will be a duplication.

Sincerely yours,

Eileen C. Largey

Eileen C. Largey, MA

12 Hutchinson Drive
Port Monmouth, NJ 07758

cc: Senator Stafford
Senator Pell
Senator Specter
Senator Kennedy
Senator Chafee
Senator Dodd

Enclosures -- (Retained in files of the Committee in the interest of economy.)

Senator PELL. Without any further business, the subcommittee will recess and reconvene at the call of the Chair.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

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